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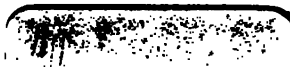
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A. Growell

THE
Profession of Bookselling

*A HANDBOOK OF PRACTICAL HINTS FOR THE
APPRENTICE AND BOOKSELLER*

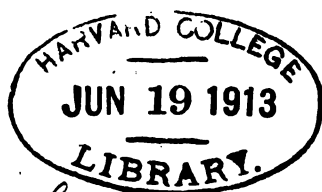
Spence
By A. GROWOLL

Part III

*Edited by
Mr. Augustus H. Taylor*

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By R. R. BOWKER COMPANY

FOREWORD

To ADOLF GROWOLL the profession of bookselling was one of the highest of callings. When he came, from the printer's case, into the editorial offices of THE PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY, and through self-development became ultimately its managing editor, the thought of this high calling was the inspiration of his daily work. It was always his desire to do his part in inspiring the book trade with the highest principles and furnishing it with the best equipment for its daily need. With this aim, he planned the development of a manual on the profession of bookselling, chiefly through editorial articles and other material prepared mostly by himself for the columns of THE PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY. To this he could give attention only as the pressure of other work on THE PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY permitted, and at the time of his lamented death in December, 1909, he had published but two out of three parts of the proposed volume, in book form, though he had collected and had partially written out the material for the final and completing part. No attempt has been made to revise or bring up to date these earlier parts, or the bibliography which Mr. Growoll had himself prepared, or to modify the later articles as published separately in THE PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY by Mr. Growoll. The third and completing portion has, since his death, been brought together and edited by his loving and faithful friend of many years, Mrs. A. H. Leypoldt, wife of Frederick Leypoldt, founder of THE PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY, who together inspired Mr. Growoll to become a scholarly worker in the field he came so to love. He was a man who came to his own through patient and conscientious toil, and he reached a high plane of achievement in his work as an editor. It is pleasant to recall that his character and his relations with the trade were so thoroughly appreciated in those later days by his associates without as within this office, and as president of the Booksellers' League and always a welcome guest at gatherings of the trade, he had made his mark among his co-workers in this great division of promoters of education. It is a sad gratification to his immediate associates of this office to be able to publish this work, in completed form, as a memorial to and monument of his character and his labors.

R. R. BOWKER.

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THE PROFESSION OF BOOKSELLING.

PART III.

THE CORRESPONDENCE DEPARTMENT.

THE importance of a correspondence department—which may also do duty as an information bureau—strange to say, is recognized by but few of the smaller houses in the book trade. And yet, through such an adjunct the wide-awake business man is enabled to extend his business beyond the limits of his own immediate locality, and to form pleasant if not lucrative business connections. It enables him often to do a large business with comparatively small stock, and to dispose of books which his local patrons may long ago have outgrown, or which, for other reasons, have become "plugs."

Another reason, though one of a more sentimental character, why such a department should have a place in every business establishment, is that it will help the firm to a reputation for promptness and courtesy in correspondence, a factor for prosperity that does not receive half the consideration which it merits. Almost every business communication requires an acknowledgment of some kind. People, especially those in business, do not ordinarily write letters for the pleasure it affords them; yet many business houses are remiss in making either prompt or satisfactory acknowledgment of such favors, and the writers are left in suspense as to whether their communications have been received or lost in transit. Every order should be acknowledged upon receipt, and notice given of any probable delay that may be unavoidable in filling it. Courtesy and business policy demand this from the recipient of mail orders. Too often attention to these matters is deferred by the average busy man to a more favorable opportunity, which perhaps does not occur until a reminder makes a reply imperative. This inattention, which practically amounts to rudeness, invariably causes friction and dissatisfaction that not rarely lead to a rupture and the permanent loss of a customer.

A correspondence department should necessarily be in charge of a competent, well-trained book clerk who combines with his practical knowledge the capacity to write clearly and to the point. The services of such a person would command good pay, but he would no doubt be self-supporting from the start, and in time he would add considerably to the revenues of his employer. In certain lines of business the cor-

respondence department is the most valuable part of the establishment, and its superintendent the most important individual on the staff of employees. This is easily accounted for when it is considered that this department has as its field the whole country—sometimes the whole world—and that therefore its ambition may be almost without limit.

The head of the correspondence department of a book-store should be a bright, active man, fairly well read, thoroughly posted on books and editions, and, above all, an expert in the art of using catalogues and works of reference, of which he should have as complete an outfit as possible. He should read the home and foreign literary and trade papers and keep them on file for ready reference. A merely literary person, while to a limited extent useful in such a position, would not be the one desired; he must have a mercantile qualification as well, because he must have the knowledge and tact to quote such books as are within the means of his correspondent, independent of their comparative literary merit, and have a fairly intimate knowledge of stationery, and the ramifications of the side lines which every large book-store is now obliged to carry to a greater or less extent.

Few things give a customer greater satisfaction than the assurance that his wants are borne in mind by the man with whom he is dealing. Advice by letter to such a customer of a new or forthcoming book of interest to him, while it may not in every case bring immediate results, will in time fix upon his mind the conviction that his bookseller is obliging and enterprising and therefore a man with whom it may be profitable to deal. Besides, he is likely to boast of such attention to his friends and thus make propaganda of a most lucrative kind for the bookseller.

It may be well for the correspondence clerk to begin with his immediate locality and seek out such people as may be interested in books, and from time to time notify them of the leading books that have been recently issued. He should above all things keep himself posted on the specialties or hobbies of his customers, and keep customers supplied with information pertaining to them, always quoting the prices and terms at which he can supply the books

or other material bearing upon the subject. Then the outlying districts may be canvassed. Where no directories are available it might be well to watch the local papers for names of prominent men and women who attend public and social functions. To these a letter might be sent informing them of the general lines kept in stock and requesting the privilege of keeping them posted from time to time on new books, etc., or, if desired, on the particular things in which they may be interested. In most cases notice will be taken of such communications, and when once a correspondence has been established it may not be amiss to request the names of such of the friends of the correspondents as may also be interested in books, who would no doubt be pleased with the attentions given to the person addressed. From such beginnings a large circle of correspondents is likely to grow; and upon cultivating it the usefulness of the correspondence will depend. Those distant from large centres are as a rule most anxious for the better class of literature. A good correspondence clerk will know how to take advantage of the points outlined and how to extend his circle of acquaintances.

Perfect system, of course, is necessary in conducting such a department as this. A good memory may be useful, but method after all is more to be depended upon. Nothing should be left to memory, for even when it does not lead to confusion in the mind of the head of such a department, it may, in case of his illness or unavoidable absence from business, lead to disagreeable complications. A good training in classification is desirable, for by it may be determined, without much waste of time, to which class a book belongs. Up to a certain point subject indexes are provided in the "American Catalogue," in the monthly indexes in *The Publishers' Weekly*, and in the annual "Catalogue of English Books," published by Sampson Low, Marston & Co.; but for the most recent books, and especially for announcements of forthcoming books, an index must be provided by the correspondence clerk himself. For this purpose a card catalogue, made of the P size cards provided by the Library Bureau, will be found most useful, because it admits of indefinite expansion. In this can be put, with brief titles and note of publisher and price, the new books as they appear under their subjects, as Political Science, Medicine, Horse, etc. While reading the trade or literary papers, memoranda may be made upon these cards at once of desirable books, with a note of the paper and date in which the announcement was made. The latter item will time and again prove of the greatest impor-

tance. A note of reviews will also prove valuable. A catalogue of customers, classified by the subject in which they are interested, may be kept in the same way.

A Day Book, ruled as below, will also be found convenient in keeping a record of business done with correspondents:

Date Received, 189	Correspondent or Customer.	Address.	Date 189

Date Reply 189	Inquiry for Book or Article Ordered.	Reply	Date Sent 189	Am't Charged.	Date Paid 189	Remarks.

As already noted, all inquiries and letters should be answered on the day they are received; each item should be covered fully, and as much more information given upon a subject as may be at command. Good stationery, with neatly printed or engraved headings, should be used, and the writing, whether by pen or type-writer, should be plain and clean, so that it may be easily read. Too little attention is often paid to the latter details, and yet nothing offends so much as an illegible or slovenly letter.

Especial attention should be paid to the style in which letters to prospective customers are written. The ordinary soliciting letter is a petty document. Some are merely polite, others are over-polite, and more are fawning. A letter to make an impression should be vigorous, and at all times straightforward and impressive. A good letter gets trade on the same principle that a good salesman secures it. Each will have a distinctive and refreshing manner to gain attention and respect. Each will talk business and business only, and will talk it in an interesting way. Interesting doesn't mean amusing. Business is interesting to those who intend to buy, if the right side of it is presented. A thing must become interesting to a buyer before he spends money for it. A letter cannot talk for an hour to a buyer and meet his arguments and contradict his theories. It should therefore anticipate them. The letter must be brief; it must furthermore be incisive and logical. It should show that the writer is earnest and believes what he writes, and it should not touch on small points, as they are apt to weaken the more important ones. One argument in a letter is usually enough; therefore it must be a good one. It should consist of the best reason why the recipient should

buy of the house represented by the writer. That point should be made practically unsailable. All arguments that may be brought against this point should be anticipated. Let the argument be so clear that it can be understood without effort, end it with the strongest point, and then stop.

Letters can serve to keep the people who buy always awake to the dealer. They should always go out with a vim, a brightness, distinctiveness, and decision that will insure for them a welcome. They can make one dealer seem more enterprising than another; can convey the impression that he knows his business better than his competitors; can make him the man most thought of and best thought of in the line for which he stands. But letters can also have a neutral or opposite effect. Finally, a copy of every letter sent out should be kept, indexed at the time it is copied in the letter-book.

The success of the correspondence department depends much on close attention to detail inside and upon careful and judicious advertising on the outside. The large houses who do an extensive mail-order business are careful to keep up their appropriation each year to purchase space in mediums of large general circulation. They always use liberal spaces, and apparently do not believe in small "ads." The minimum seems to be at least five inches single column. Copy is looked after carefully and changed frequently. There must be no half-hearted or spasmodic attempts. The dealer must have the courage of his convictions, and keep his business everlastingly before the public, not only in his immediate locality but also as far abroad as possible.

In advertising, as in window display, it is better to confine oneself to a few articles as possible. An advertisement calling attention to a few leaders, with short, direct descriptions and the price, is considered the best result-bringer. To each advertisement should be added a request for catalogue. The name and address of each applicant should be carefully registered, and the catalogue forwarded promptly. If no notice is taken in a reasonable time, a note of the fact should be entered against the applicant's name, that it may be skipped when the next batch of new catalogues is sent out. If an order, however small, is received, the purchaser should be favored with attention when the next catalogue is mailed; he should practically be considered a customer of the house, and every means employed to retain his trade.

The manager of a large department store in New York advises that when no response is received by the time such a customer has had the second catalogue long enough to have sent

an order, a reply postal-card like the following should be sent:

"MAIL-ORDER DEPARTMENT.

"On looking through our registers we note that you have not favored us with an order for some time past; as we are anxious to retain you as one of our patrons, we would thank you to inform us if you have had any cause for complaint, that we may thoroughly investigate and do justice to all concerned. Please let us hear from you, and on application we will mail you one of our catalogues for ———."

"Trusting that this may merit your approval, and hoping for a renewal of our business relations with you, we are,
Yours truly,
"———"

If no response is received to this postal the customer's name may be dropped. But it will be found that in nine cases out of ten some kind of response is received that will pave the way to a correspondence, bring further orders, and eventually establish the customer. Constant care and close attention to details is required to keep the correspondence department in working order. Even an original order amounting to fifty cents, if carefully and promptly attended to, may make a customer who will in time buy hundreds of dollars' worth a year.

Special attention should be given to the preparation of a catalogue. This should be a serious publication, carefully worded and well printed, that it may create a desire to purchase by the evident honesty of every detail. It must be remembered that the catalogue is the canvasser for the house, and hence should make as favorable an impression upon its recipient as the most efficient attendant at the store would be expected to make. Loose statement, a huddled-up arrangement of the items, poor paper, and sloppy printing will repel rather than attract a prospective customer. Upon its individuality almost everything will depend. It should speak week by week, or at longer or shorter intervals, as may be found more practical by actual experience, of all the new books of importance in such a way as to create a desire on the part of the buyer to read the books himself. It should be suggestive and incentive, strictly literary, and without any of the elements of "puff" which make the average advertising circular objectionable. Above all it should be so worded as to convey more information in a given time than it would be possible for a salesman to give by word of mouth in twice the time.

Whatever medium is used, care should be taken, as we have already pointed out, that the catalogue is dignified and to the point, otherwise it might be better to send out none at all. An unfavorable impression in this direction is not easily removed.

THE SALESMAN.

THE most important, though often the least recognized, agent in the distributing of books is undoubtedly the salesman whose field of action is confined to the limits of the book-store. Upon him depends much, and more is expected of him; and yet he probably rarely gratifies the almost boundless ambition of those whom he serves—his employers and their customers.

The book salesman is expected to know everything, to be able to endure everything, and to accomplish everything. Any book asked for he must know. He must be able to stand any amount of physical and mental strain; he must make large buyers out of every customer he waits upon; sell a big bill of goods, and keep the stock constantly on the move and the money coming in. These are very vital and necessary points to be sure, for without such a combination the establishment would soon be out of existence.

Much depends on the salesmen; indeed, the entire business is dependent upon them. Hence it behooves the employer to be extremely cautious whom he selects to represent him, for he must bear in mind that his salesmen act for him in their contact with the public, and, according as their conduct is, so is the reputation of the concern. It is surprising what an effect the conduct of salesmen has upon the public, and how quickly it is noised about for good and bad. The house that has the reputation of having well-posted and, at the same time, agreeable and polite salesmen, has an addition of capital that dollars and cents will not equal.

Good book salesmen are scarce, probably because but few of those who have entered the retail trade have ever given the time, study, and attention to the matter that they should. So many are satisfied with a superficial preparatory schooling and make no effort whatever to add to it, or even to hold the knowledge they already have. The present low standard of salesmen is no doubt due, to a certain extent, to the methods which have developed so much bazaar business; cheap-Johns, and the like. This system, which prevails in almost all parts of the country, has tended to lower the standard of the average salesman, especially because the retail dealer has been compelled by competition from this class of trade to resort to job lots, and to carry large lines of stock that do not tend to raise the standard of the book salesman. Therefore comparatively few retailers

have been able to keep up to the high standard of days gone by. But fortunately it is becoming more and more patent every day that the higher the grade of stock carried, and the more able the salesmen employed, the better are the chances for improving and developing the business.

A brief investigation of this point will, we think, satisfy any one of the truth of this assertion. The salesman who lacks education or, let us say, general information, can never be possessed of that keen intuition that is required to gauge the literary bent and tastes of the customer upon whom he may be waiting. He can sell him what he asks for, what there is a pile of before him, but he can rarely so influence his customer as to lead him into another channel that will be profitable alike to both. At all times, and under all circumstances, the customer likes to meet the well-posted salesman, with whom he can converse, from whom he can derive knowledge, and who can receive knowledge when it is imparted to him by the customer. A mutual exchange is always agreeable. It can always be noted that stores so equipped with educated, well-informed salesmen invariably draw a class of business vastly different from such as sell books by the job lot. To them, salesmanship, if we may be allowed the term, is of no consideration. It is not in our province to discuss the two classes of business—the standard and the bazaar. We are discussing salesmen, and a salesman may be of greatest value in both kinds of business.

The salesman must be a true diplomat in all things. He represents his employer, as the statesman does his country. His object is to sell to the customer what he wants and to make him want more than he is conscious of. This must be done by personal influence on the customer, by judicious suggestion, by gradually leading him from one book to another, and, above all, by the rare tact of knowing where to stop before the customer becomes uneasy or suggests officiousness. Here the most serious blunder may be made, and a good customer may become disgusted and may be lost. The salesman exercising self-control can lead his customer into buying, apparently without effort on his part, and as though it were utterly immaterial to him whether he bought or not, even if he is a raging furnace of anxiety within. A calm and pleasant exterior is demanded at all times.

A combination of perfect gentlemanly ease and contentment, delicate modulation of voice, with not a particle of affectation, is the delight of the regular bookbuyer, and it will generally be found that, whenever possible, the customer prefers to be waited upon by such a salesman. The unfortunate who endeavors to fill the position of a book salesman, who lacks patience, who is uneasy and irritable, whose temper is easily ruffled, who lacks forbearance and has not a sympathetic nature, has taken upon himself a task that will be a burden to his soul, a thorn in the side of his employer, and a curse to him as long as he remains in the position.

The Book Salesman, above all other salesmen, besides having the qualifications of a merchant, must be a gentleman, and generally a cultured one. By this we mean that his knowledge should be of such a character that he may be ready to converse according to the humor of his customer, be it on the recent political trouble in Europe, or the proposed flooding of the Sahara desert. This may seem absurd and out of place in business. It may be so in business, but not in the profession of bookselling; for the salesman, from the very nature of his calling, is thrown into daily contact with people of culture, to say nothing of specialists, such as a Professor of Political Economy of Columbia College, or a great civil engineer of the College of Mines and Engineering, or a collector of first editions, all of whom are deeply interested in their topics and are apt to—finding in the salesman an intelligent listener—express their views on their particular hobbies. A wise salesman will keep the specialties of each of these customers in mind, and encourage conversation about them. While listening to the conversation of his customer his mind will be running over a list of books that have appeared, or are about to appear, that may be of interest to, say, the Professor of Political Economy. At the conclusion of the Professor's remarks the salesman may agree with them and say,

"By the way, Professor, have you seen the 'Statesmen's Year-Book' for —?"

"No. Is it ready?" replies the Professor.

"Yes," the salesman says, "it is just in," and hands a copy to the Professor.

While the Professor is looking it over the salesman leaves him and glances over his counter, and rapidly picking out Mackay's "A Plea for Liberty," Fiske's "Civil Government," and other talked-of books of the day, places them in a pile beside his customer.

"A very remarkable book that," the Professor may remark, as he lays aside the Year-Book with the remark that he will take it.

"Here are several other books that may in-

terest you," the salesman ventures to say as he puts aside the "Statesman's Year-Book." "I do not know whether you have seen them or not." In describing Mackay's book briefly as one of the most important contributions to the literature of socialism and socialistic legislation, and calling especial attention to the introduction by Herbert Spencer, in which he brings down to date the arguments of "The Man vs. the State," with an allusion, perhaps, to the other essays contained in the volume, as for instance the adverse review, by Mr. Fairchild, of Sir Charles Dilke's picture of state socialism in his "Problems of Greater Britain," and giving a like synopsis of the other books selected, the salesman may add that they have been commendably reviewed by experts and that he can recommend them as desirable books. Then he hands to the Professor the first book described, then another, and another, and so on.

During this process the salesman should appear unconcerned, as though he were doing the Professor a favor, not suggesting by his manner that he expects a favor from the Professor. An occasional side-remark, that *The Nation* spoke very highly of this particular book in a two-column review, or that it has been out of print several times since publication, may assist the Professor in weighing the value to him of the work, and call his attention to the fact that those whose duty it is to appraise books have rendered their judgment, which the salesman has given him briefly and to the point. While he is looking over them the salesman still continues his mental research for such books as will please his interested customer, and he makes a little trip about the table to find something more; or, he may remember having received a circular of a new and important book. With this in his hand he approaches the Professor just as he has placed the last book back on the table, with the remark:

"Professor, have you seen any notices of this new work—an 'Encyclopædia of Political Economy,' that is soon to be published? Here is a circular fully descriptive of it. If you will glance over it I think you may find it to be of value to you; or if you have not the time now, if you like you may take it with you and let me know at your convenience whether we shall send it to you."

By this means the salesman has shown that he is alive to the Professor's interests and wants, which the latter will appreciate; and by not pressing him for an immediate subscription, but asking him to take the circular home and consider it, he impresses the Professor with the idea that he does not desire to take advantage of him, but to have him use his own judgment at his own convenience. This is always

agreeable to the customer, for if there is anything the average customer detests it is a pushing and importunate salesman. In the long run such a salesman will always be shunned.

When the salesman observes that his customer is through purchasing, which he can tell by his manner of handling the books shown him, he should stop, and begin a conversation that will interest him, walk with him toward the door if he has time, and bid him a polite good-morning, as though he were a guest speeded from the salesman's own door. The customer will have a good opinion of such a salesman, and it will be a pleasure to him to call when passing to have a chat about books and the like. Courtesy is a fine art, and he who possesses it is well supplied for the profession. It should be cultivated by all means and always practised to every one alike, from the one who buys to the one who is only "shopping"; and to keep in the practice that makes perfect it is well that the salesman exercise it daily towards his own comrades.

Time, in most establishments, is an object to the salesman. It is not wise to spend time indiscriminately and without judgment. A salesman ought to be able to gauge his customer at once; if he cannot at the first attempt he should after another effort to interest him to buy. If the disposition is not shown, and other customers are needing attention, the shy customer should not be left without a word, but it should be politely suggested that if he would like to look about the counters the salesman would be pleased to have him do so. He should be shown one or two of the most popular books to look at, with an explanation as to what they are, and then left to himself; if possible, the other salesmen should be warned that this special customer had better be left alone. Then the salesman should wait upon other customers, with whom he may be more successful. On this point we lay special stress, for in the book-store of all others, people, especially bookbuyers, like to look around. It is very natural and should by all means be encouraged. If the reputation be established that all persons are promptly waited upon, but that they may look about undisturbed, the house has a reputation to be valued. Many people, especially those of a reserved disposition, are made nervous and annoyed by the salesman standing by them. They fancy that they are watched, or else that they must buy before they can get out. This is a serious error, and the salesman must see to it that all cause for it is avoided. Let customers wander freely to their heart's content. Let them feel that they need not buy if they do not want to; that they can look at the books, and ask questions, and go out without

let or hindrance. And it will follow that they are apt to become frequent visitors to the store; and by degrees they may become buyers, and perhaps valuable customers. Otherwise, were a salesman to persist in trying to sell to them, that would in most cases be the last he would see of them. Let the motto of the store be, "You cannot buy without looking, but you are free to look without buying." It does not cost anything, and the more people that come in the store the better; for where there is a crowd others will follow.

The art of gauging a customer's purchasing capacity is a difficult one, and one that is not always readily mastered. It requires delicate judgment to "size up" a customer. Many times a customer who in reality desires to buy is at first diffident, and may mislead the salesman. The best plan is to endeavor to discover the customer's taste. Unless the salesman can get at this he is likely to waste much valuable time, for it is certainly an absurdity to show a rare edition of Rabelais to a customer who reads only the last novel by "The Duchess" and the like, and *vice-versa*.

"Do you take any interest in biography, history, etc.? Here are several new books by so and so."

This is a leading question, and the expression of opinion that will follow will probably convince the salesman that the customer does not.

"Is there anything special that you would like to see? What class of works interests you most?"

This is another leader, and, spoken casually, as the salesman glances over the counter, will perhaps elicit the reply that works of natural history, or the sciences, are the particular hobby. The road is now clear. Having shown the recent works on the subject, the salesman may ask:

"Have you a copy of Wood's 'Natural History'?"

"No, I have not."

"We have a set of the best edition. If you will step this way I shall be pleased to show it to you."

The salesman puts before his customer the set, and enlarging on it he quotes the price. He also mentions Jardine's "Naturalist's Library," Cuvier's "Animal Kingdom," and others in the same line. Now the chances are that he has struck the right channel, that salesman and customer will come *en rapport* with each other, and the at first distant customer will become more intimate and tell what books he has and what he would like to have. It now depends on the salesman's knowledge and ability, having got his customer thus far, to make the sale. He should search through the

catalogues for his customer, prepare a list for him—in short, do all he can to assist him, and he may be rewarded as he deserves. If, after all, the customer does not buy, the salesman should be just as serene and happy as when he began. The customer will feel especially pleased if the salesman remarks that when he is ready to purchase he will be glad to wait upon him.

The customer of the opposite style—he of the effusive and demonstrative character, who will look at everything shown him, praise them highly and seem delighted, but who never says, "I will take it"—is a pitfall to the unwary salesman. This customer wastes much of the unsuspecting salesman's time, and fills him so full of hope and expectation of making a large sale, that when he sees the customer go out with the stale excuse, "I will call again," his disappointment will no doubt be great. Such a customer should be treated with every caution. We have seen piles of books four feet high about such a customer, which the hard-working salesman had brought together from every corner of the store, urged on by the warm-hearted encouragement of his customer.

The salesman should "feel his way." It is singular how he can become an adept in this respect if he trains himself to a close observation of those with whom he comes in contact. We mean this to apply to the general public, not to regular customers whom he constantly meets, and whose peculiarities and tastes he will soon learn and remember. The appearance of the customer may often offer a clue—the professional people generally express their calling by special characteristics; the bibliophile, the novel-reader, the lover of solid reading, can likewise be discovered. If the salesman have any doubt, and the customer does not aid him by expressing his desire, or by asking for any particular book, he should put before him three or four kinds of books at first, as, for instance, a novel, a book of biography, travel, or philosophy. The customer's tastes will be indicated by that which he at first selects for nearer inspection. The road is then clear; the salesman has successfully felt his way.

Many customers have an aggravating way of asking for one book at a time. When this is brought to them they ask for another. In such a case it is proper to ask a customer if he would like to see any other books, as they may be brought at the same time. It will save labor and time for all concerned. Nothing is more trying than a customer who refuses to do this, as he will consume much time and no end of patience. Such a customer is evidently in no hurry and leisurely examines the books brought to him. If other customers are wait-

ing the salesman is perfectly justified in leaving him for the others, taking care to call upon his dilatory charge every once in awhile. The customer has no right to expect that he can have a salesman's sole attention merely for his convenience. The salesman should be careful to study his customer's methods, and he will find from practice that he will be able to determine very accurately whether he can with propriety leave him to attend to others, while of course remembering to go back to him from time to time.

The salesman should be very careful how he meets customers who enter his store. It is a mistake to pounce upon them the moment they enter the door, as though the salesman were delighted at the approach of a victim. Let them get well into the store, and give them time to find out where they are. Having got thus far they should be approached unconcernedly yet pleasantly. No indecent haste should be shown to wait upon them. On this point the salesman should be extremely cautious. Few things contribute more to the loss of a sale than the over-anxious and importunate salesman. He betrays himself the moment he begins, and the customer, as soon as he becomes aware of the salesman's intention, is put on his guard, and is quite likely roused to resent the salesman's importunities. On the other hand, if the salesman, quiet in manner and undemonstrative, yet warm enough to show interest in gratifying the customer's wishes, so impresses himself upon his customer, he at once gains his good-will, and he will be pleased to note the reciprocal feeling of the customer as he unbosoms himself to him and expresses his wants. The moment his desires are discovered, the salesman should show some interest in the customer's inquiries and begin with becoming zeal the pleasant task of getting what is wanted. It is surprising how well such methods work. It softens the crusty customer at once, and endears the salesman to the genially-disposed; they will attentively listen to what he has to say and take pleasure in looking over such books as he may deem they might purchase. He should not forget to watch for the proper time to stop and should try to avoid being told to do so. He should not press further when such is the case. Stop.

When he has a good customer who is buying liberally the salesman should remain calm—outwardly indifferent, however anxious he may be within. This is the test of the true salesman. He should keep the customer warmed up, but not ply him too fast. He must keep in mind what he will show him, before he is through examining what he is

looking at. The customer must be led on as if accidentally—as though it were by no studied effort on the salesman's part. The salesman should be quiet in his movements. Nothing is so painful as the rushing salesman who flies from one end of the store to the other, pulls everything from the shelves and piles the books about the customer in endless confusion. Such a course is apt to alarm and confuse the customer, who is led to imagine that he is buying up the whole store. The books purchased by the customer should never be piled up where he can see them, as it is a constant warning to him, and he is apt to stop. They should be left where they are shown, or, better still, should be put back, if taken from the shelf or table before the salesman. A memorandum of the purchases should be made as the salesman goes along. He should be careful to show no anxiety here. On the contrary, he should treat the whole affair as a matter of daily occurrence. Let him take his customer easily along, who will partake of the same spirit, and perhaps not realize how much he has bought. The salesman should never call upon others to assist him, and should not have the whole staff of the store engaged in bringing all the stock to him. It is better to take the customer to the books, as the salesman can more readily engage his attention by general conversation as they journey about. Besides, it is bad practice to show book after book without some adequate break, as it is apt to weary the customer if he is fed with good things too fast. He must be held on to, not hurried out. It is good to proceed slowly always, and by easy stages. Many a large purchaser has been stopped in his delightful career by the hasty and over-anxious salesman.

Over-selling a customer is as bad as not selling him enough. The easy buyer is apt to fall a victim, and the salesman, therefore, cannot be too cautious in this respect. He should not take advantage of a man's good-nature if he knows it, and when he declines, continue to press him till he consents. It may make the sale at the time, and the salesman may congratulate himself, but he may be sure it will have its bad effects; for the chances are that such a customer will, after he comes to himself when out of the salesman's presence, regret his purchase and fight shy of him and his establishment in the future. It is a nice point to know how far to go, but we hold it is better not to sell enough to a customer than to overdo the selling. Not that his buying is to be stopped, if he does it of his own free will, and—some little persuasion on the salesman's part.

The salesman should be cautious in all his transactions. He cannot be too careful in mak-

ing out his orders for the order department. He should enter on the order books, or slips, whichever is used, the full title of the book. He should not write it in slovenly manner, nor abridge the title if he can possibly help it. He should give all the information he can, especially the name of the publisher, the edition he wants, the binding, etc. The name of the customer should be correctly spelled, and the initials in every case, together with the full address, should be given. It should be completed by stating whether paid, charged, or C. O. D. It must be signed, and then the salesman's part in the transaction may be considered done. The salesman must never fail to make a charge, either by calling it off to the entry clerk, or by making the entry himself in the charge-book, whichever is the system adopted. There is no excuse for not doing this. To avoid all possibility of forgetting it he should make it his practice to charge the goods before he makes out any slips. If the customer takes the books with him, the salesman should keep them in his hand until he charges them; then wrap them up and deliver. If the slips are made out first he runs the risk of having his attention diverted, and of eventually forgetting the charge. If a salesman gets into the habit of forgetting to charge, nothing but an unostentatious funeral will ever cure him of the habit. He may be a loss to his family, but his taking off will be a saving to his employer.

There is nothing more provoking than the salesman who knows everything. He is only equalled by the employer who expects his salesman to know everything, and who expresses a sense of shock when he happens to discover that his salesman doesn't. Both need the condolence of the trade, for they are truly in a pitiable condition. No one is held in lighter estimation than the salesman who, when he is asked concerning a book, always knows of it, has seen it, has some recollection, cannot place it just now and so on. The man is an absurdity and shows the smallness of his nature by following such a course. Indeed, he makes a laughing-stock of himself, and becomes the butt and ridicule of his companions. No man lives, has lived, or can live, who can remember definitely everything of fifty per cent. of the books even that pass through his hands, or of those only that are in stock. Any member of the trade will admit the truth of this. What folly, then, it is for any salesman to imagine for one moment that he can pass himself off as possessing such knowledge. A manly "I don't know it" is the proper thing. Not to the customer, perhaps, but to his comrades and to his employer. He will be respected for it. He can look it up. By so grading his conduct that the

"I don't know it" is as readily spoken as "I know that book but I can't place it," he will be believed, for such is probable and may often happen to the best-posted bookman. And it stands to reason that this must be the case, for there is a limit to the brain capacity for storing titles. Memory can be made to do wonderful things. But to remember every title given to it by the eye? Never. The man who attempts it might as well commit hari-kari at once and have done with it, and so be out of his misery.

Much can be done by constant reading of catalogues and study of books. The salesman should, so far as he can spare the time, read the critical papers and reviews, foreign and domestic, and the news items of the doings of authors. He should familiarize himself with the authors themselves—who they were, where they were born, what they have done, and with the striking events of their lives. This should be done till he can fancy he knows them personally; it will then become somewhat easier to keep trace of their doings and of their works. He should read here and there a specimen of the books themselves, but must guard against the reading habit in the store or he will be undone. The salesman should collect good catalogues and book lists, the careful study of which is always to be commended.

It is a good plan for the salesman to keep a list of special customers and of the particular line of reading in which they may be interested. Nothing pleases a customer more than to find that his interests are being watched. Many good customers can be cultivated and many sales can be made in this way. Of course it requires close attention, and in busy stores it is hard to devote the necessary time to such a practice. The salesman should do it whenever he can, and if he cannot do it personally he should suggest to the correspondence clerk to do it for him.

The feeling between the clerks ought always be of the most cordial and friendly character. Where this is not the case the work is seriously hampered, for one salesman can always be a help or a hindrance to another. The customers that one salesman is in the habit of waiting upon should never be taken by another, unless the particular salesman is busy or absent. Should he be at liberty later, or return to the store in time, his substitute should gracefully retire in his favor. This is as much in the interest of the business as to maintain good-fellowship among the clerks. The salesman must not fail to be courtesy itself to every one with whom he comes in contact, customers especially. He may feel tired out, or be provoked at something, but he must not show it. He should learn to control his feelings at all times. He should

be full of smiles outwardly, though his inward feelings prompt him to murder. He should try to study the wants of his customer, and to anticipate them, and it will help the salesman greatly. He should take a pride in his house, in his employers, in himself, and in his profession. It is not well to look upon it as the worst he could get into, or to think that he was a fool for ever entering its ranks. It is a lamentable fact that too many men feel that some other business were better than the one they are in. It is hard to make a success of a profession if such feelings are harbored. The salesman must do the best he can. He must get all he can. He must be full of ambition to do more than he is doing. Let him strive to be the leading man in his profession, and if he is steadfast in these aims his reward will come in due time.

The salesman should have authority, within certain limits, to extend credit to regular customers on large or special purchases. Many responsible customers would often buy certain books if payment could be deferred for two or three months. While it may, as a rule, be good policy to favor such customers, the salesman should be slow in extending time unless he is certain of a good margin of profit in the transaction; he must calculate the interest on the investment and take into consideration, also, the chances of the loss of a cash sale for the same books. Of course, if it is stock that is certain to be slow at the best or that, for some reason, has unexpectedly "hung fire," the sale might be considered a profitable one, even if six or eight months' time were allowed. The salesman, however, must not take it upon himself to extend credit to an unknown customer. In such a case he should consult with the business department, or with his employer. If a new customer desires to open an account with the house represented by the salesman, he should introduce the customer to the business department on which the responsibility of all financial matters must fall. Nor should the salesman take it upon himself to act as spokesman for such a customer. He has done his part when he has introduced the customer to the heads of the counting-house, to whom the latter may make his wishes known. The salesman cannot be too cautious in this matter, and he will save himself and his employers much annoyance and risk if he will observe the course of action outlined above.

A salesman is often put in an embarrassing position when, after he has sold goods, he is told to "charge them." Of course, an unknown customer, who makes such a demand, deserves little consideration. And yet such cases occur almost daily. The demand is made,

as a rule, by men and women who lose sight of the fact that the particular salesman or firm with whom they are dealing may know nothing whatever of them or their standing in the business world which gives them such confidence. Some even assume an injured air, and become petulant if hesitation is shown in delivering the goods before the proper inquiry is made. Such behavior is often due to forgetfulness; the customers may be in the habit of dealing in places where they are known, and take it for granted that they must be known wherever they may go. The salesman, therefore, should not lose his presence of mind. For him the matter is merely one of business. No one is entitled to credit until he establishes his right to it. No matter with whom the salesman may be dealing, he should politely inform his customer that, as he has no account with the house, he must abide by its rules in the matter of obtaining credit, and the salesman should then introduce the customer to those authorized to grant it.

To send goods C. O. D., especially if they are to be delivered in the same city or town, is a safe proceeding; but even in such cases it is necessary that the salesman be certain that the goods will be accepted and paid for, especially if books that are not kept in stock are to be ordered; otherwise unsalable books may be left on his hands. When goods are to be sent out of town by express a deposit should be asked to cover express charges both ways. The reason for this is obvious, because it is of no uncommon occurrence that goods sent C. O. D. are for one reason or another refused and returned, and the burden of expense must then be borne by the sender.

When an unknown customer orders a high-priced book not kept in stock, one that is likely to be "dead" if not taken, payment should be demanded for it in advance. It would be better to lose the order if payment is refused in such a case than to take the risk. A salesman who is careless in this respect would soon load up his employer with a variety of "plugs." Let the salesman politely inform the customer that advance payment for such orders is "the rule of the house," and let him add the explanation that the rule was made because a large percentage of books so ordered might be refused unless such precaution were taken. The probability is that a reasonable person who really desired the book would not refuse to conform to the rule.

No import order, except for regular customers, should ever be accepted without full payment in advance. It takes six weeks, some-

times longer, to get such books, and during that time the customer may either forget that he ordered the book, or he may no longer have use for it, and therefore might repudiate his order when the book was delivered to him. He cannot be compelled to take it against his will, and it certainly would not pay even to try to make him take it.

In all book-stores there must necessarily be salesmen of various grades of efficiency. Even if the firm could afford to keep only salesmen fitted for their positions by superior training and wide experience, there must still be at the end of the line the juniors waiting to acquire experience and to fit themselves for promotion. All those, however, to whom the selling of goods is entrusted, should be more or less well posted on the ordinary details of their calling. At the head of the staff of salesman should be one or two—as many more, in fact, as the house can afford to keep—who are past-masters in their profession. So equipped, the store may consider itself ready for any emergency. The best salesman should reserve himself for the best customers, or for those who require skilled attendance. There are many customers, whose patronage it is desirable to cultivate, who are likely to buy less than they otherwise would if they are waited upon by a salesman who lacks the knowledge and ability to circumspectly direct their choice. It should therefore be the rule of the house that such customers are put in the charge of the best-trained salesman on the floor. The junior should be warned to keep this fact in mind, and to leave such customers to those who may be more competent to serve them than he. If the senior salesman is busy with a customer of whom his junior cannot relieve him, the junior salesman may offer to wait upon the customer until his senior is disengaged. When he is relieved the junior should withdraw without ostentation, or any display of feeling that might disconcert or offend the customer. It is in the interest of the business that this should be done, and that perfect harmony pervade every act. If the junior waits upon a customer who asks for books which he does not know, or is unable to find readily, he should call upon the senior salesman either to help him or to take his place. It will be readily understood that to be able to follow such a line of action the most kindly feeling must inspire all concerned, and that much depends upon the senior salesman to make and maintain such feeling. The senior, therefore, besides being a thoroughly-posted bookman, must also be a gentleman. He must have tact in handling those under him, correcting kindly those who are lax, and encouraging those who are faithful. He

must be quick to discover when it is necessary for him to step in and help out a slow and deficient clerk, or when it is better to stand by and allow one of his juniors, who may be having an unexpected run of luck with an exacting customer, to finish the transaction single-handed. To hesitate in the first instance might cause a loss to the house; to be precipitate in the second case might unnecessarily create bad feeling in the junior who, unjustly, perhaps, might jump to the conclusion that his senior was trying to rob him of credit which he considered his due for good work.

The senior should enjoy the confidence and cordial support of his employers. If he cannot win these the sooner he changes his employers the better it will be for all concerned. The firm that reposes confidence in its senior salesman, having proved that he is intent upon caring for the interests of his employer, will not be likely to expect him personally to lead in the amount of sales made each day, though some are short-sighted enough to make this a standard of merit. Such a course, as we shall attempt to point out in another article, is apt to cripple the senior salesman's real usefulness to the store. The efficient senior salesman's chief duty is to watch that customers are properly waited upon; that those under him are prompt and diligent in the fulfilment of their duties, and to render them timely aid in making sales; and, lastly, to wait upon such customers as may demand his personal attention, or those whom it may be wise to cultivate himself. In assisting his juniors he should as much as possible only guide, not

carry them, and he should be slow to take credit for his suggestions to them. The senior salesman who persistently claims credit for work done by those under him, or who obtrudes his superiority over his associates, is an undesirable store help. He is apt to breed discontent, and to disturb the discipline necessary to keep a large staff of employees in order. A senior salesman with such a disposition, and junior salesmen who will not profit either by experience or wise counsel, should be induced to seek other fields of usefulness. It would be useless to waste either temper or time upon either of them.

The salesmen should not be called upon to do work other than that connected with waiting upon customers, nor should they have other responsibilities. The occupation of a salesman is a trying and fatiguing one and requires all his energy to properly perform it. It is unwise to expect other work of him, for by doing it the salesman is apt to meet the customer fatigued, or with his mind filled with other things. Of course, dusting the books and arranging the shelves in his department is legitimate work for the salesman, and it should be insisted upon that he does it regularly and promptly. On dull or rainy days the salesmen should go over the entire stock in the store, indeed, it is excellent practice for salesmen to pair off in this work—that is, while certain ones watch for customers one morning, the others for an hour or longer, if there is nothing to hinder, go over the stock. If this can be done regularly it will keep the staff fairly well posted on the stock and its location.

THE STORE-BOY.

IN our remarks addressed to store help we have thus far only had in mind the apprentice and the salesman. There is, however, still another grade, at the very bottom of the ladder—the store-boy, a factor who is generally overlooked until he arrives at an age when it must be considered whether he can be made to fit in as an apprentice-salesman, or whether he must be turned adrift.

It is generally assumed that boys are a nuisance that must be endured. And yet a boy can do some things better than a man; but boys who do them well are scarce, because in most cases the boy is not properly taught. If the older men were to bear this cause of present conditions in mind they could cultivate far more useful material than is now available.

Most boys who begin their career in the book business are apt to be easily discouraged. There is much to try their patience and per-

severance. But if a boy is taught to learn one thing at a time he will find his duties easier; and before he becomes aware of it he will have mastered the art of being liked as well as that of being useful.

Boys that go from home to learn storekeeping, especially those who go to large cities from country places, are apt to become homesick. It is a good omen when the love of the old home and its inmates remains warm in a boy. Boys who have it are generally made of good stuff. But the homesick feeling must not interfere with duty. We should counsel such lads to keep in touch with the old home by writing often. Thoughts of home and of parents and relatives will help them to keep good company and to brave the world's temptations.

Boys are apt to half do things. They ought therefore from the start be made to do the half-

done thing over and over again until it has been done thoroughly. Sweeping is a thing that boys usually are obliged to do first. It is not an easy job and every boy is expected to learn it for himself. Let a boy be instructed to begin by first lifting out of the way everything that may be set on or near the floor. Then let him dampen the floor by whatever system may suit best—with a sprinkling can (an abominable method), or wet sawdust, damp papers, damp broom, etc. Teach him next to hold the broom down properly and not to throw it around him, or up in the air to make more dust, or to spatter books or walls. Let him learn at the very start that dust ruins goods, and that soiling is expensive. After sweeping comes dusting. Clean cloths, one a little damp and the other dry, and well-greased elbow joints are necessary, so that the boy may not tire too soon and only half do the dusting. The windows and window-frames, outside as well as inside, must be carefully attended to, because there the signs of untidiness are first noticed. Then the glass-cases, counters, shelves, and store-room need attention almost in the order named. Waste paper should be carefully sorted, the good portion folded and laid away, and the useless portion disposed of with the other rubbish and sweepings. No rubbish or paper must be allowed in corners, under the stairs, or in the yard. It is liable to ignite and cause the loss of thousands of dollars' worth of stock. Besides, it is untidy, and the store has little use for untidy boys.

No boy should be permitted to be idle. After tidying up the store, sweeping, dusting, and cleaning, or even while busy with his chores, the boy should be ready for business and do what he can with a right good will. He should get into the way of thinking that he is working for himself. He will then not have to be scolded and driven. There is no time for idleness in a bookstore, not even for five minutes in the day. It were better to rearrange what was arranged the day before than to be idle.

When sent with a message or parcel, impress upon the boy to move on the instant, and to act with his wits about him and with spirit until the job is done. Teach him to keep to the right and to be gentle about it, to turn out to the right if there is room and when he meets anybody; but he mustn't lose time, he must dodge in and out wherever there is room and keep a good look-out ahead. To get into a crowd is dangerous, and a boy had therefore better go around it. Let him give way to everybody, but let him get to his destination quickly. Above all he must never dawdle, nor go two and two. There isn't room or time in business

for that. Nothing makes a boy more valuable to his employer than promptness and dispatch in keeping appointments, and in delivering messages and parcels.

Speaking of promptness, a boy must never be late. Some clerks may get to the store ten minutes late or later, but a boy should be ahead of time rather than behind. If the hour is seven, half-past seven, or eight o'clock in the morning, the boy should be there to the minute, or before. And a faithful boy will not overstay his noon hour. Most employers will gladly give a boy an extra ten, fifteen, or thirty minutes upon request, when there are good reasons for it, but no employer likes to have his people come in late, as a matter of course, without arrangement.

When sent out with parcels the boy should be instructed to handle them with care, and to touch them as little as possible. Parcels must be delivered in neat shape and clean condition, otherwise they give offence and bring reproach upon the store. For that reason they must not be tossed about, bumped against hard objects, set down in the street, or used as seats. While on the subject of neatness, it might be well to insist upon cleanliness. Hands and face should always be clean, hair and finger-nails short, and clothes and shoes well brushed. As for deportment, the boy should learn to be just as unobtrusive as he can and to keep out of everybody's way. He must not be expected to keep still, for that is not in a healthy boy's nature, and he should therefore not be expected to try. While waiting for something special to do he might be allowed to sit, stand, or walk about, whichever will make him least tired. The most effective way to keep him still is to give him something to do, however slight the task may be. Whether busy or not the boy must not whistle, or sing, or make any sort of noise, or talk when unnecessary. When he needs to speak let him go near the person with whom he has business and speak low. Shouting in the store, if repeated after the first warning, should be punished by dismissal.

The store is made and kept full of costly things to serve the people who come. But the storekeeper will not get the chance to serve unless he first pleases the people who come. The thing to think of, then, is to please them— whoever and whatever fails to please them is in the way. This should be impressed on the boy and be his guide to proper behavior.

Many who come to the store have beautiful homes, and are accustomed to gentle ways. They are hurt by rude behavior and frightened by noise. They are accustomed to being made way for—not pushed against. Their servants are ready, respectful, obedient, quick. If the

boy is inattentive and noisy and rude they are shocked. They will think ill of the store and remain away, and so the storekeeper will perhaps lose the chance to serve them, through the misbehavior of the most insignificant of his employees.

But apart from the store and the employer, it is better for the boy to learn to do his work and

waiting in pleasant ways. It is better for him that the store should be a school in which he may learn to be agreeable as well as useful. A boy that bears these facts in mind will find opportunities opening for him fast enough to spoil him, unless he looks out. A man may remain overlooked; a boy that minds his own business—never.

SELLING SUBSCRIPTION BOOKS.

THIRTY years ago the book trade regarded the subscription-book business with some uneasiness, and even anxiously discussed at its gatherings, and in the trade papers, the question, "Is the subscription-book business eventually to drive out of existence the regular trade?" After twenty-five years, another generation looks with different eyes upon "book-peddling," and is beginning to argue whether, after all, this particular line is not more properly a part of its business than are some other lines that have long ago become recognized features of every bookseller's stock in trade.

Old-fashioned merchants in this country considered it beneath their dignity to "scramble for trade," as they called it, and even a generation ago the merchant addicted to lounging at his store-door was considered as a "puller-in." To hang out a sign, and to give formal and "respectful notice to the public" that Mr. So and So had opened a shop or emporium, where "he would be pleased to serve those who might desire rare bibliopolistic treasures, musical and optical instruments, and rich china silks," was considered sufficiently enterprising for a bookseller to put himself *en rapport* with the community. If he then appeared at his shop at the hour when his apprentice took down the shutters, and remained in attendance until the night-watchman started his rounds, he was extolled by his contemporaries as an "exceedingly diligent and capable merchant." People in the "good old times" moved slowly. They waited patiently for weeks, even months, for what they wanted if their good friend, the storekeeper, didn't happen to have it in stock; or they bought the next best thing. In the days gone by the customer looked up the shopkeeper, kept on the "right side" of him, so as to have the first choice of his "latest consignments," and was satisfied to carry home his own parcels.

In these latter days the old methods have been entirely revolutionized. The shopkeeper is obliged to look up his customers, by advertisement in the newspapers, by means of circulars and correspondence, through representatives, or in person. He must not only meet the demand,

he must also create it. If the customer does not come to him, the bookseller, unless he is willing to be crowded out of business, must go to his customer. This is the fundamental principle on which the publisher of subscription books conducts his business, and this accounts for the success not only of the distributor of works of solid worth, but also of the book-hawker who disseminates the veriest trash. Let the agent but be posted, and have the address suited to his constituency, he will, with the necessary perseverance—another word for enterprise—bring to his net the cultivated and wealthy reader as certainly as he catches the man with moderate means. America is a nation of book-buyers, strange as that may appear to the trade. If the "regular" bookseller would but study the modern means of book distribution—through the bazaars, at news-stands and railway stations, through purchasing and book agents—he would begin to realize the urgent necessity for a change in his methods of bookselling. What is possible to the book agent who has none of the many aids of the regular trade, the help of the newspapers, the advantage of a settled headquarters of sale, and a previous acquaintance with his customers, should be equally possible to the regular bookseller who enjoys all these advantages.

Subscription-book publishers are continually in want of reliable agents. There certainly seems to be no good reason why a bookseller should not take the agency of one or more of the better subscription books for his town, and thus gradually work the book business back into its proper channel. Our retailers must wake up to the necessity of enterprise in this direction. As it is, to speak plainly, the book agent, single-handed, with far less opportunities beats the bookseller at his own business.

The subscription-book business is a distinct branch of the book trade, and is usually carried on as such exclusively, or, at least, entirely independent of other branches in which a firm may be engaged. Subscription books are considered to be such publications as are sold by agents directly to the bookbuying public,

for which these agents solicit subscribers by means of canvassing. It is implied that such books will not be put in the hands of the bookseller, and that they cannot be had in bookstores.

In this country two features prevail as to the general nature or character of subscription books. The first class comprises the very choicest works issued from the American press, expensive or medium in price, which the publishers have special reasons for not selling through the trade—*i. e.*, the publishers expect to increase the sale of these publications by pushing them through the aid of a corps of well-trained and experienced canvassers.

The second class consists chiefly of popular books, medium or low in price, that very frequently have little merit in reference to their contents or "get-up," calculated for the great multitude, who, it is believed, seldom or never visit a bookstore and who could not be reached effectively except through personal solicitation by agents.

Subscription-book publishers as a rule, take every precaution that their books, at least when first issued, shall not be handled by booksellers, or shall not be found for sale in bookstores, in order to give their agents the prestige of claiming that the particular book they sell is not for sale in local stores, and can only be had through them. However, most of these publishers begin to sell their productions to the trade as soon as the novelty is worn off. This is particularly the case with popular books. Publishers of the better grade of books, those which have an intrinsic value, in many instances follow the practice of allowing to local booksellers a commission for such subscriptions as they may obtain; but the publishers prefer to forward the book direct to the address of the subscriber, and to collect the amount due through their agents.

Few, if any, of the better class of subscription books are ever found in bookstores. Dealers in second-hand books, however, very often have copies (or know where to procure them) of all such or similar works soon after their appearance. Publishers cannot prevent their subscribers from selling their copies, for one reason or another, to dealers, who will offer these copies, as a matter of course, at a reduced price. A system of numbering each copy of subscription books, as they leave the bindery, has been adopted by leading subscription-book publishers—an arrangement which enables the publisher to trace the agent who sold it, and to what subscriber the book was originally sold. This method makes it possible for the publisher to determine, without going to much trouble, whether an agent has broken his contract and

sold copies of the book in question to dealers, allowing them some discount.

Very often the publishers overestimate the demand for a certain book, and print more copies than the public will buy. In such instances the surplus of stock is unloaded, through auction sales or other means, on the general book trade, or the copies that are practically dead stock are sold in lump to some prominent newspaper or magazine, to be utilized as premiums. As a very conspicuous example of this kind may be pointed out the memoir literature of the late war. "General Grant's Memoirs" had probably the largest sale of any subscription work ever issued from the American press. Over 650,000 copies, it is stated, were sold. But in time the sale dropped suddenly, and the large remainder of the work was sold, together with other memoirs—by Generals Sheridan and McClellan, and others—to an enterprising magazine, which offered each of the following memoirs of generals to its subscribers for 70 cents a copy: Grant's, 2 vols., subscription, \$7; Sherman's, 2 vols., subscription, \$5; McClellan's, 1 vol., subscription, \$3.75; Sheridan's 2 vols., subscription, \$6, and R. E. Lee's, 1 vol., subscription, \$3.75. Other cases will no doubt be fresh in the reader's mind without having them pointed out here.

The successful subscription-book agents who canvass for the better class of subscription books are, as a rule, gentlemen of culture and refinement, and of good address. Some of them find their calling very remunerative, often yielding them from \$150 to \$500 per month. These agents are doing missionary work by introducing literature, *i. e.*, good books and works of art, in circles that would never dream of buying these or similar works in a bookstore. Many canvassers for popular or useful works often introduce the first books to the home of the mechanic or farmer, and create a taste for reading among people who have perhaps paid no attention to books since their school days. In the sparsely inhabited districts of the Wild West the book agent becomes in fact the pioneer of literature and science, as the people inhabiting those sections of the country have no other means of getting books or of becoming acquainted with them. Hundreds of copies of a book, be it good, bad, or indifferent, are not infrequently sold in one county to people who never saw a bookstore, nor ever ordered a volume through a book-dealer to be sent to them by mail.

On the other hand, much evil is brought about by unscrupulous publishers, through the issue of so-called subscription books, which have nothing whatever about them to excuse their existence, and which are not worth the paper,

poor as that may be, they are printed on. Some of these modern literary (?) productions, usually printed on a pink tinted paper, and still more defaced by the silliest steel engravings (after the pattern of some old fashion magazine or "annual gift-book" in vogue about seventy-five years ago,) are utterly worthless, if not worse. They dwell chiefly on moral conduct—a certain kind of so-called Christian religion; manners; Indian stories; history of wild men and beasts; life among the Mormons, or in convents; etiquette; how to get and keep a husband [or wife], as the case may be; The Hidden Treasure; The Golden Censer; Royal Path to Happiness, etc. These themes are generally treated in a wishy-washy, goody-goody or sensational if not vicious manner, that oftener does more harm to the reader than it enlightens him on these subjects. This class of books, however, it is fair to say, is rapidly going out of existence. The public has so often been cheated in purchasing, at a high price, valueless truck from agents, that for some time past a reaction has indeed been noticeable, and everybody is more careful in buying. A publisher who desires to be absolutely certain that his productions will find a market must at present offer something that is worth having, and at a lower price than could be formerly asked.

The success of a subscription book publishing firm does not so much depend on the merits of its books, or their "get-up," *i.e.*, the style of printing or binding, or quality of paper, as it does upon its manager's knack of selecting and retaining such agents as are particularly fit to sell books on the subscription plan. A good agent can sell almost any book. There are many people who have been successful in business and who have money enough to enable them to indulge in the luxury of purchasing books, either for amusement or instruction. If these are approached by a persuasive agent, they are apt to be seized with a desire for books, and consequently give the agent an order, vaguely hoping that in this way they may be doing something for their "neglected education." These people are seldom or never seen inside of a bookstore, nor have they any idea of what books would be suitable for them, and know nothing about the prices, editions, binding, printing, etc., of books. They may perhaps be familiar with the more famous names in literature, such as Shakespeare, Byron, Burns, Walter Scott, Thackeray, Dickens, George Eliot, Bulwer, etc., and will buy these works in any editions offered to them through canvassers. These editions are frequently gotten up in large clumsy octavo volumes, poorly printed on spongy paper, and in the dullest binding imaginable, for which the subscribers

will pay double the price at which neat, handy editions can be had in any local bookstore. An Eastern subscription house, that has more than thirty branch offices throughout the country, and employs several hundred canvassers, is at this moment putting on the market editions of the best authors, which answer the description above mentioned very closely. Nevertheless, this firm sells a large quantity of these very editions at a high price, for the simple reason that their manager evidently understands "the ropes." Being ignorant that neat and cheap editions can be had at the bookstore, the public pays an extraordinary price for inferior editions of standard works, because the subscription-book publisher pays his agents a large commission for presenting them at the homes of the bookbuyer.

Other important subscription books, besides the standard authors, are the following: Bibles and religious works in general; scientific and domestic medical works; recipe books; legal advisers, or everybody's lawyers; social and business forms; biographies; histories; war books; travels; works of art; wit and humor; encyclopædias; dictionaries, etc. Nine-tenths of all large family Bibles are sold through canvassers. Valuable scientific treatises and monographs, which otherwise might never be printed, are also published by subscription. Local poets very often find the subscription plan the only possible means of delivering their immortal writings to posterity.

There can be no doubt that the plan of publishing books solely by subscription offers many advantages for certain classes of books, and that it will take many years before the American retail book trade will be developed to such a degree that this mode of putting certain books before the public can be dispensed with. In the meantime we fail to see any reason why the bookseller should not employ a part of his machinery to cultivate this field, provided that he conducts this part of the business with the required enterprise, and as a separate department. For the present, at least, it would seem to hold out greater inducements in the way of profits than the handling of certain lines that he is obliged to carry in order to maintain his reputation as a bookseller.

The bookseller who intends to handle subscription works should, first of all, decide what grade of books would, under prevailing circumstances and the local conditions, be most likely to prove salable. This choice would also, to a large degree, depend on the personality of those to be engaged in the venture. Successful subscription-book men are generally not adapted for the miscellaneous book trade, and *vice versa*. Managers or agents who are able

to successfully handle costly encyclopædias, fine works of arts, etc., are often at a loss how to place popular cheap works. For these reasons it is proper to consider at the start the character of works to which the bookseller wishes to devote himself.

There are three distinct classes of subscription books; only that class should be selected that best suits the circumstances and individual characteristics of the intending agent. The nature or kind of subscription books may be designated as follows:

First, Fine art works, (containing etchings, photogravures, steel or copperplate engravings,) and large works of reference, such as encyclopædias, dictionaries, extensive historical and geographical works, etc., expensive in price, that appeal to the tastes of wealthy bookbuyers, and the needs of libraries, etc.

Second, Histories, biographies, memoirs, scientific treatises, mechanical works, books of travel, large atlases, etc., adapted to the general reader, and medium in price.

Third, Popular works of all kinds, intended for the masses, such as religious books, family Bibles, business and social forms, family physicians, receipt books, family atlases, etc.

For each class a different canvasser is necessary to achieve a decided success. The first class requires a man of culture and agreeable manners, which enable him to move with ease in the best circles, and who possesses, besides a fair education, a good judgment of human nature and of the vanity of mankind. For the second class the canvasser may be less elegantly clothed, but he must be a hustler and willing to work. He should be thoroughly posted on the merits of the particular book he canvasses and also have an agreeable personality. For the third class a man is needed who can talk in their own language with the people to whom he is offering his books, and entertain them on familiar topics. There are but few agents who could sell successfully all three of the grades of books referred to.

Great care should be exercised regarding the character of the canvasser employed. The very best agents are subject to "spells" that must be contended with. An habitual drunkard, however, is a hopeless case, and his application should not be considered under any circumstances. Some of the larger subscription firms owe their success to the so-called instalment plan. The book, or entire work, if in several volumes, is delivered on receipt of the order, and payment is collected in weekly or monthly instalments, generally fifty cents, until the whole amount is received, during which time the publisher retains the ownership of the work, as stipulated by a signed contract.

It is not advisable to have too many works to push at one time. The best plan for the bookseller is to devote his whole force to one particular work, which may perhaps just then for some reason be in special favor with the public. This is to be pushed vigorously and persistently, and if the interest ceases it is to be dropped. In its place some standard book, which, by its very nature, is always salable, may be taken up, and as soon as something new comes out that requires immediate attention, it may in turn be taken up next.

The proper arrangement of subscription books published in parts offers itself. Each number of a work is put together, and all works arranged by authors in alphabetical order. A stock-book should be kept, showing what is on hand. The keeping of accounts with the subscriber and agents is easily applied by adapting it to the ordinary ways as practiced in bookkeeping. Individuality and usage decide in such matters, and practice will soon teach the simplest and most labor-saving methods.

The requisites of a good book canvasser should be honesty, ability, and experience. The lack of experience can be supplied, but he must start out honest and have the ability to convince a possible customer and tact to influence his decision. He need not necessarily be educated, but he must be intelligent, and he must have good sense. He must be persuasive and quick-witted, able to turn a point in his favor quickly, and in order to do this successfully he must be a quick reader of men. Books of a special character can, of course, best be sold by men with a special knowledge of the subject treated, who naturally will have love and taste for a good work treating of it.

To sell a book successfully the canvasser must have a fairly intimate knowledge of its contents. To enable him to do this the publisher prepares a prospectus giving a comprehensive description of the work, with specimen pages and illustrations. These prospectuses, as a rule, are prepared with great care, and are usually nearly as expensive to the publisher as the copies of the books which they represent. The canvasser must know the prospectus thoroughly, though he need not learn it by heart. He must, however, be so familiar with every page of it as to know it surely by sight, whether he is looking at it from the top or from the bottom, so that if a prospective customer should point out upon any page anything concerning which he desires further information, the canvasser shall know the paragraph without the necessity of taking the book to look at it or of any other close inspection, and shall be able to answer without interrupting the current of the purchaser's interest.

The printed description of the prospectus with which the canvasser is fitted out is really but the skeleton of the canvasser's talk, to which he is expected to add, as good sense and circumstances may require. He must have the basis sound, the general facts right and ready for use, but he should in no sense be a mere machine. The weakness of most canvassers is that they are likely to talk too much. It would be well to guard against this, and to insist that a few points well made will be better than much desultory talk.

Before sending out a canvasser it would be well to make certain that he is reasonably well grounded in the subject of the book for which he is to solicit subscriptions. Questions that customers might ask, and objections they might raise, should be anticipated, answered, and met. After that trial has been successfully endured the canvasser is ready to make his rounds.

It is not my intention to accompany the green canvasser on his rounds, and to offer suggestions how he shall meet his customers. If he is fitted to survive, the rebuffs and the successes with which he will meet will but give him his cue how to act in the future. As a suggestion toward a beginning, I will quote the advice given by "an old hand" in "The Art of Book Canvassing," published by the New York Book Concern in 1874:

"The principal street of your town is the best; begin at the end of the street, and call on everybody in it. This is the only way to canvass; this is the way we old canvassers have made money; and when you have finished one street do the same thing in the next. Set yourself a task every morning, rain or shine (rainy days are always good, because people have little to do, and ladies are at home, and they can give your book more attention,) and show and explain your work to one hundred people. We will answer for the result. If you think you can make money without hard work you are mistaken. . . .

"To canvass private houses you will have to ascertain the name, which is done by asking the party of No. 1 who lives in No. 3, and send up your card, but not your profession; hide your specimen-book under your coat from the servant, and tell her to say (handing your card) you wish to see Mrs. — (the name you have previously ascertained) a moment on business. She will come down, though she does not know

the name on the card, for ladies have a great deal of curiosity. The better you are dressed the better description the servant can give of you. You should always wear gloves when calling on ladies, and study the habits of good society. When the lady comes down you must apologize for having disturbed her in her domestic quiet, and proceed to show her the book, as previously instructed. If she will not come down send the book up by the servant, being particular to point out the 'Conditions of Publication.' The author has taken many good orders in this way; and if you get a few good names to head your list, there will be no trouble in getting many more.

"The hardest thing with which beginners have to contend, in this business, is *despondency*. After they have shown their book to twenty-five or thirty people, and not taken an order, they begin to despond, and feel like giving up. You must fight this tendency; fight it as the reformed drunkard fights his love for rum. The author has shown his book in house after house, and blocks of houses, for three whole days, from Monday morning to Wednesday night, and not taken a single name. He felt 'blue,' of course, but he kept on, well knowing that there were orders to be taken in that city (it was Washington, D. C.), and if he didn't take them that some one else would, and he persevered; his energy was rewarded the last three days of the week by what men call 'luck,' but which is simply the power to stick to the business you are pursuing through 'thick and thin,' and he took thirty-three orders from Thursday to Saturday, thereby making a full week, and a pretty good one too. He got one dollar and fifty cents per order, thirty-three, at \$1.50, \$49.50. This goes to show that despondency, like danger, when boldly confronted, retreats.

"Some men in the business attribute their successful days to the amount of magnetism they are able to throw off. This is a subject, we confess, we are not prepared to discuss; but this, we know, that *perseverance*, in whatever walk in life, meets with ultimate reward. Another thing you must guard against is undue elation at your success when you begin work in the morning. You will sometimes take an order from the first three or four people you call on, then you will be prone to leave off work for the day; but remember that the sun does not shine every day."

THE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER.

Friend: "I understand that, in your line, a man must be very plausible and persuasive?"

Drummer: "Yes; especially when he's explaining to the firm why he hasn't sold any goods."—*Puck.*

DEAN TRENCH has said that nothing is harder than a definition; and to define absolutely who is and who is not a commercial traveller might involve the one who attempted it in a lengthy if not wordy argument. The difficulty, it seems to us, would be to determine who can *not*, rather than who *can*, lay claim to be placed under this title. Charles Dickens himself, who not unfrequently used the commercial room in his wanderings in search of information and study of character, seems to have been puzzled by this very question. So much so that he entitled one of his books the "Un-Commercial Traveller," in which, after introducing himself, at first negatively, he says:

"No landlord is my friend and brother; no chambermaid loves me; no waiter worships me; no 'boots' admires and envies me. No round of beef or tongue or ham is expressly cooked for me; no hotel advertisement is personally addressed to me; no hotel room tapestried with great coats and railway wrappers is set apart for me; no house of public entertainment in the United Kingdom greatly cares for my opinion of its brandy or sherry. When I go upon my journeys I am not usually rated at a low figure in the bill; when I come home from my journeys I never get any commissions. I know nothing about prices, and should have no idea, if I were put to it, how to wheedle a man into ordering something he doesn't want. As a town traveller, I am never to be seen driving a vehicle externally like a young and volatile pianoforte van, and internally like an oven in which a number of flat boxes are baking in layers. As a country traveller, I am rarely to be found in a gig, and am never to be encountered by a pleasure train, waiting on the platform of a branch station, quite a Druid in the midst of a Stonehenge of samples.

"And yet—proceeding now to introduce myself positively—I am both a town traveller and a country traveller, and am always on the road. Figuratively speaking, I travel for the great house of Human Interest Brothers, and have rather a large connection in the fancy goods way. Literally speaking, I am always wandering here and there from my rooms in Covent Garden, London—now about the city streets, now about the country by-roads—seeing many little things, and some great things, which, because they interest me, I think may interest others. These are my brief credentials as the uncommercial traveller."

Dickens says, "I am both a country and a town traveller, and am always on the road," so that, if we were to go afield in this direction we should have to speak of the hundreds of thousands instead of the hundreds of men and women engaged in business which takes them away from their home establishments to solicit orders. Interesting as the study of the larger field may be, we must draw the line strictly at the unofficial traveller—the militia of the road, as it were—and restrict our remarks to the regular traveller who has his credentials from mercantile houses of undoubted standing and repute; a man who is in receipt of at least five dollars per diem for expenses, and stays at first-class hotels; who is a welcome guest at the home of the patrons of the firm which he represents; and who is looked upon with pride by his peers and with envy by the small fry.

This much, it seems to us, necessary to say in an attempt to define and bring us within measurable distance of the meaning of the term "commercial traveller." In the following pages we shall attempt to look a little closer into the duties and responsibilities of the class of men whom Balzac has immortalized in the "Illustrious Gaudissart."

BOOKSELLING THROUGH TRAVELLING AGENTS.

Though the "drummer" is distinctively an American product, the selling of goods through travelling agents is probably as old as commerce itself. Books, that is, printed books, have been so sold ever since the invention of printing. For a century, at least, the bulk of the books printed were sold by itinerant booksellers, either principals or agents, to private buyers and to the trade. The inmates of monasteries in sequestered localities, for example, were almost wholly dependent upon the book peddler, or, as they styled themselves, *bibliopola libros venales deportans*, for the latest productions of the press. Even university towns encouraged the visits of the travelling booksellers by liberal patronage and by privileges of various sorts. During the period of the uprising of

the peasants in Germany, as well as during the Reformation, it was the travelling bookseller who often combined with his calling the office of advance agent of new political and religious ideas, just as in later times, in new countries, he was the torch-bearer of civilization, and frequently the only link between a condition of barbarism and culture. His travels extended throughout Germany, Italy, France, Spain, and England. As the art of printing spread to countries beyond Germany, the agents of the printers in those countries invaded the fatherland of printing and all the cities beyond their own, until, by degrees, the famous trading centres like Paris, Frankfort-on-the-Main, and, later, North German Leipzig, became the *dépôts*, during the spring and autumn fairs, of the book products of the world. Later these fairs were introduced into England, and, two centuries later, a short-lived attempt was made to introduce book-fairs into the United States.

The book-fairs gradually went out of existence in England and in France. In Germany the book-fair exists only in name, the Oster-Messe (Easter fair) marking simply the end of the fiscal year, when accounts are settled and an uncertain number of the membership of the Börsenverein meet in social intercourse. But the itinerant bookseller—the commercial traveller—survives, and prospers despite antagonistic legislation here and abroad, despite even the “trusts.” The treasurer of a “trust,” in the early days of trade combinations, declared in substance that the formation of “trusts” in all lines of business would be a great boon to the public, because the “trusts” would do away altogether with commercial travellers, the cost of maintaining whom, by the wholesalers, was an unnecessary tax on the consumer; and, that, since the members of the “trusts” had no need for travelling salesmen, the prices of the products sold by “trusts” would be reduced by the amount saved in salaries paid to travelling men. How wide of the mark this statement was, those intimately acquainted with the imperative necessity of modern commerce to seek a market away from home, need not be told.

QUALIFICATIONS OF A TRAVELLING SALESMAN.

The qualifications necessary for a good commercial traveller are of so unique a character that it is always more difficult to select a man for the road than for any other position in a large mercantile house. The advantages of holding this position be-

ing more strikingly in evidence than the disadvantages connected with it, and the talent required being so considerably underrated by aspiring applicants, it becomes perplexing to select the right man out of the many untried ones who imagine themselves able to fill so important a position. The reason for this condition is probably more due to the fact that there is not the opportunity for the apprenticeship in this field than there is in the other departments of commercial life, than to the lack of good material.

A lad that has a talent for figures can be educated by the slow process of evolution from an entering-clerk, through the counting house, to be chief cashier, with a reasonable assurance that in the end he will be the right man in the right place. The movements of apprentices in the retail and sales departments can also be watched step by step until they reach the counter or “the floor,” and give final proof of their ability as salesmen. There are also special qualifications required to make a successful buyer—judgment, enterprise and discretion, traits that many an excellent salesman does not possess; yet the difficulty of selection in this department is not so great, because every salesman with ordinary ability and enterprise has an opportunity of watching his buyer’s tactics, and thus of fitting himself for the vacancy when it occurs.

None of these opportunities is open to the would-be commercial traveller, for with the exception of occasional trials made among the city trade at home, or at a short distance, the aspirant to the position of traveller is an untried hand and in most cases must make his first venture as a speculation both for himself and the house—hence the frequent complete failure of many men sent out, and the consequent loss of trade to their employers. This lack of provision for services sure to be needed must be considered a weakness in the management of most large houses that may be attended by serious consequences. The motion of trade depends very largely upon the activity of the wide-awake and experienced commercial traveller; yet there is little or no opportunity for a young man to secure the experience necessary to make him a valuable promoter of the business of his house. These two facts, and the importance of changing travellers as seldom as possible, should convince the heads of large mercantile houses of the necessity of apprenticing a man intended for the road for at least one or two years to a

skilled commercial traveller who is known for his knowledge of business, his steady habits, industry, reliability, perseverance and general success.

An "ambassador of commerce" must of necessity be a **born traveller**—that is, he must take to travelling as naturally as a duck to water or as a swallow to the skies; if a man has not this gift, or adaptability, or a gypsy nature, no amount of drilling will ever compensate him for the lack of this necessary qualification. A pleasure trip by railway or boat, and moving quickly from city to city, may fascinate and stimulate the occasional excursionist; catching trains at all hours of the day and night, in all kinds of weather, sleeping in the cars, putting up at all sorts of hotels, now in overheated and then in dank, chilly rooms, getting meals at all hours or going without them altogether, is not quite such good fun. Add to this the unpacking and packing of trunks during the short stops, sitting up late at nights writing out orders, or, perhaps, writing them out on the train, so as to catch the earliest mail possible, and it will gradually dawn upon even the uninitiated that the traveller's lot is not altogether an enviable one. Of course, the traveller takes advantage of every opportunity to travel in comfort, to live at the best hotels, to dress well, and all that; nevertheless, he is obliged on every trip to "rough it" more or less, and time and again to dispense with such of the creature comforts, as the stay-at-home would consider it a hardship to forego for even one night. Hence, as we have said at the beginning, it is necessary that the "ambassador of commerce" be a born traveller, and a man of physical strength as well. A robust constitution is most necessary. The mind and the body being so closely connected, a pure and natural flow of blood to the brain is of great importance to clear thinking and right acting. A man with a sickly, dyspeptic body too often takes "no" for an answer, and thus fails where a man of stronger physique succeeds.

Furthermore, the commercial traveller must always be prepared for hard work. Though he is of necessity left very much to his resources and his own idea of what constitutes a fair day's labor, and has perfect freedom as to the hours he may take for work, rest, and pleasure, he will consider no day too long even if it extends from sunrise to midnight, if by making the effort he can safeguard his employer's interest or extend the circle of his operations. "Rest" is a word that has but a doubtful meaning in the vocabulary of a com-

mercial traveller, because upon his very unrestfulness depends much of his own success and that of the firm which he represents. Even when at home, between trips, and technically resting, he is busy mapping out his next tour, drawing up, with the aid of an armful of railway guides, an exact schedule of the dates at which he expects to be at the towns he intends to cover; studying how he may advantageously reach a certain point in a given time and make ample allowance for transacting business at the intermediate stations, and other mental and mathematical gymnastics. While engaged with these wearisome and exacting details he is called away again and again to greet customers who may have come to his city to buy and who need his assistance and advice; or he may find it necessary to push the shipment of an order to an importunate or urging customer; or he may be called upon to give information to the head of this or that department, and so on until the time has arrived when, with his trunks packed and his mileage-book in his pocket, he bids the establishment good bye for another four months. We therefore maintain that none but a robust man can stand the mental and physical strain under which the commercial traveller must perform his duty.

MENTAL EQUIPMENT OF THE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER

Mentally, the commercial traveller must be above the average of intelligent beings. He must not only thoroughly know the field in which he is working, but he must also be well posted in the new events of the day, as a discussion of them is often of valuable assistance in leading up to the subject in which the traveller is naturally most interested. No intelligent business man cares to waste his time on a dummy. If the salesman has brains and a pleasing manner he can secure an audience where another would fail utterly, and, having once established a connection, he will always be welcome for his own sake as much as for the goods he has to show.

The work of a traveller tends to sharpen his wits; he comes into contact with all kinds of characters, his knowledge of human nature grows, his horizon is broadened, and he is enabled to take larger business views than one who is tied down by routine work. Being obliged to depend very largely upon his own resources he naturally acquires the habit of making up his mind quickly, and so is enabled to give an opinion without much apparent preliminary thought. Experience will

bear us out in asserting that such snap opinions are oftener right than wrong, and are backed up by the maturer deliberation of the home office.

Next to self-reliance comes moral courage, a quality of prime importance. Temptations without number beset the salesman even under favorable circumstances. As Mr. Frank Marling in his talk on the subject before the Booksellers' League pointed out, "it frequently happens that the sale of a book hinges on the answer made to a direct question. How hard it is then to be strictly truthful and to state the facts as they really are—not that it is the salesman's duty to call attention to the literary defects of his books—he should always make out the best case for them that is possible. But he is frequently in a position where he has to say yes or no on a special point;" and he must give answer truthfully, on the ground of moral honesty as well as on the score of policy. Truthfulness in a salesman is a virtue which will soon begin to tell in a pecuniary as well as in a moral way, for people will inevitably prefer to deal with the man upon whose word they know they can depend respecting the value they are getting for their money. The most hopeless and contemptible of bankrupts is the man who has lost his reputation for honesty; the most useless to all employers—the most expensive while least worthy his salary, the most to be avoided by customers and abhorred by merchants—is the shifty or dishonest salesman.

The abnormal development of moral courage is "cheek," which, if carried to extreme, will rebound upon its owner, and bring with it loss of patronage. The quality of nerve, in its good sense, on the other hand, is a most indispensable one, and the traveller is called upon to exercise it almost every day.

The traveller's duties are also favorable to the cultivation of patience and its companion, perseverance. Without patience a commercial traveller might as well quit at once, for he will be called upon to practice patience hourly. He must wait upon his customers' convenience and humors, time and again, as the sailor must wait for wind to fill the sails of his craft. To keep one's temper under such circumstances may often be a sore trial; nevertheless the trial must be endured without loss of temper.

While the traveller must put up, with such equanimity as he is able to command, with the dilatoriness of customers, he must himself be a pattern of punctuality. At all risks and inconveniences he must keep his engage-

ments—anticipate them if possible. Time is money with most busy people, and while some may at times thoughtlessly waste the time of others, they resent having their own time squandered, especially by those who, in a certain sense, expect favors.

Not only must a traveller possess these qualities, or cultivate them if he has them not, in order to be successful, but he must keep a clear head—be sober in dress and habits. Twenty-five years ago the idea of a traveller implied a man dressed in flashy clothes, of loud demeanor, who demanded and got the best of everything wherever he went, and regarded morals as only of secondary importance. A drummer in those days, it was thought, could not be successful unless he got on an occasional "spree." The drummer now is expected to be a gentleman in all that the word implies. He must be a gentleman in conduct as well as in appearance. Dissipation or "tearing" around is countenanced by neither the house who employs or the reputable customer who deals with travellers; nor will the better class of men on the road associate with the drummer who thinks it his duty to get drunk or act "smart" wherever he goes. It is true that freedom from the restraints of home and neighbors, the very character of the business, the "treating" in which many indulge, all constitute powerful temptations that require firm moral courage to withstand, and a young man bent on going on the road cannot be too earnestly or emphatically warned about these dangers. On the other hand, we are glad to believe that a better practice now prevails, and that the average commercial traveller in the respect of sobriety is of a distinctly higher grade than formerly.

SALESMEN WITH IDEALS.

A young man who was about to start on his maiden trip for a large publishing house was asked by the senior member of the firm whether he had confidence in what he was about to undertake. "Certainly," said the young man, "I have been taught that 'he who aims too low aims beneath the sky.'" The old gentleman remarked, "Take care, take care that you don't aim beyond the sky." And much needed advice this is to many another strenuous youth who, as he starts out on his business career, intent upon coming out ahead, shoots at random beyond the sky, and often is in danger of shooting himself. Aiming beyond the sky is quite as useless as aiming at the solid earth. Not that we would

discourage a higher than average aim; on the contrary; but the lesson the young man must learn is that the aim must be definite. There must be a plan, a motive, an idea clearly fixed in the mind, to attain to which every nerve should be strained. With an incentive, backed by character, seemingly insurmountable obstacles may be overcome.

Numbers of men leave their schools and homes every year for their ventures in the world without the semblance even of an ideal. Year in and year out they do exactly what they are told and not a particle more. They fill their places in the establishment about as the shelves and counters and other store fixtures do, though hardly as uncomplainingly, oblivious of the fact that they exist simply as items of expense, and contribute in no wise to the enlargement of the business. On the other hand, the young man with an incentive, with a definite plan in life, ambitious to be more than a "sweeper in the temple," who reads, thinks and puts two and two together, resolves and plans that his apprenticeship must fit him for a position in which he can have more scope for his energies. He keeps a sharp lookout on all that is hourly occurring around him and absorbs inspiration from all quarters as Smiles's "Joe Ladle" did, even at the pores. He determines to make himself of so much value to his employers that they will not care to do without him. The secret of his success is not "luck," but his determination to do something definite; to make himself by punctuality, by attention to all the small rules and regulations of the concern, by cleanliness, honesty, sobriety, and by incessant application and enterprise, a power in the business. Any man with tact and application will, other things being equal, be able to reach a certain altitude of success in the commercial world; but the eminence attained will always depend and be in proportion to a previously conceived ideal based on a man's conviction and ability to estimate himself at his true value.

Of course it is essential that a man should know himself thoroughly, and only accept positions for which knowledge and experience have fitted him, because if he has false notions of his own value failure is certain. Yet there is danger also in underrating one's self. Indeed, confidence in himself and in the prestige of his house, based on rectitude and on goods of sterling value, should be the salesman's tower of strength. A commercial traveller's sales as one thoroughly acquainted with the subject has written, "will be much

about what his preconceived notion of what they should be; and there is scarcely a limit to the amount if the ambassador's idea is but a high one." It is imperative to keep on aiming upwards, as the result must be in proportion to the object aimed at; hence the well-known figures attained by different men, one man with a high ideal doing treble the amount of business over a poor ground done by another whose standard is a low one. "According to thy faith" is as applicable to business as it is to ethics; and a constant application to doing an honest day's work is as necessary to morals as it is to making a fortune.

KNOWLEDGE OF STOCK AND CUSTOMERS.

It would seem superfluous to point out that the commercial traveller should make himself thoroughly and perfectly familiar with the entire stock of the house by which he is employed; yet it has happened that travellers have not deemed it worth while to post themselves on any but the new lines that they happened to carry on a particular trip, thus delaying, if they did not altogether lose, a sale on stock several years old. If a book is mentioned the traveller should be able to state instantly whether or not it is in print. It is also of utmost importance that he should be intimately acquainted with prices, so as to be able to give from memory, or from his pocket price-book, the price of any book the instant it is asked.

Next to having a thorough knowledge of his own stock and business, it is necessary that the traveller be familiar with that of his customer. He should know, approximately, at least, what kind of a business his customer is doing, what class of people patronizes him, and what lines would be best suited to the needs of that class. He may make a miss in that direction some times, but a knowledge of human nature, and close observation and investigation, will before long help him on the right scent.

It requires little tact or ability to sell goods to a customer who is bent only on getting all he can on credit, without due consideration of the matter of making payment when due. It may, however, require considerable tact to properly treat a customer whose intentions are honorable, but whose resources, ability, or experience are limited. A reliable traveller's view of the standing of a customer—of his personality, his characteristics and his business methods—should be of inestimable value to his employer or to his credit-man. The points upon which the traveller should

aim to inform himself are: How does this man conduct his business?—What is he? Who is he? How does his store look—is it a clean, tidy, business-looking place? Does he conduct his business himself or leave it to his clerks? Is he mixed up in outside affairs, or does he concentrate his energies and time on conducting his own affairs? Is his store management economical? How does he live—extravagantly or modestly? These are all questions which a man of average intelligence and habits of observation can train himself to obtain answers for, and to weigh these carefully and report them dispassionately to his employers. Upon this one qualification of the commercial traveller much of the prosperity of his house, as well as of his own usefulness to it, will depend.

A more or less intimate knowledge of the standing of his customers will also considerably assist the commercial traveller in despatching his business. If he knows the purchasing capacity of the people with whom he deals he will save himself much worry as well as time. If a buyer is known or suspected to be dishonest, let him be treated with only on a cash basis. If necessary he should be told frankly why credit cannot be extended to him. If a customer is worthy of credit up to a limit, he may be supplied with what he really needs without going beyond the limit fixed for his credit. Should he insist upon buying beyond his capacity, the traveller may tell him plainly in a tactful and friendly way that at present he does not wish to carry him for more than a given amount. If the customer be a sensible man he will take no offence; if he is not a sensible man it would be unsafe to carry him any way.

Of course, no sensible traveller will try to load up even those of his customers who may be able to stand the pressure. It may succeed once or twice but inevitably there will be a "slump," and the traveller's reputation and usefulness will suffer for a time. With a small customer the trick of overloading will generally result in a loss. Disgust of the small dealer at his own bad judgment will be mingled with distrust of the salesman who persuaded him to take the risk and he will thereafter buy none of his stock that he can get along without. Thus the retailer suffers, and the publisher loses what might have become a good customer. It will always be found better policy and safer trading to *under* state than to *over* state, to advise moderate rather than lavish purchases to most customers.

All travellers of experience understand perfectly well that, having once won the confidence and patronage of a retail dealer, he is influenced to a great extent by their advice and recommendations. It follows, then, that these should be offered intelligently and in the strictest good faith, with an earnest purpose on the part of the salesman to subserve the best interests of his customer. Their interests, after all, are identic. The more goods the retailer sells the more he will buy from the wholesale house which has won confidence through an honest and careful representative. A bill of goods which is unprofitable for him to buy is unprofitable for the wholesale house to sell him and *vice versa*.

THE STATUS OF THE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER.

The term "ambassador of commerce," as applied to the commercial traveller, is no mere euphemism when it is considered that he is always absent on important business, and that his occupation is far away from the seat of government. He must be truly a representative of the opinions and interests of those at home—just as his sample trunks, if properly prepared and packed, are representative, in miniature, of part of the home establishment—and he must always remember that his success and that of his firm are identical. He may have his general instructions as to where he is to go and on whom he is to call; but he must not be burdened with too much "red tape," or the object of his mission will be defeated.

He must be a man of originality and strong individuality, perfectly free and untrammelled. A good traveller will always command this freedom of action, for who can be so competent a judge of the requirements of the ground he covers as himself? A weak man, who has to be dictated to from headquarters, lacks the true spirit of an ambassador, and will prove of no service either to himself or to his employer. In short, a commercial traveller will be respected just in proportion to the respect which he has for himself, and his position will be higher or lower just to the extent that this respect is manifested.

A thorough man will not require even the "crack of the whip," for being, in a measure, a "law unto himself," he does not need the assistance of further instructions; indeed, it is often more necessary to warn such a man against doing too much than to press him to do more. On the other hand, if the commercial traveller cannot do business without constant urging he is either unfit for his position,

or those superintending at home, having very likely themselves had no experience on the road, or of the field, are equally unfit for their position. A good man is often made totally unfit for his day's work, every particle of interest or "go" taken out of him by some stupid remarks in a letter to him by an ill-informed employer at home. Unless principals can write helpful letters to their representatives abroad, they had better not write at all, or recall the man who needs such attentions. It is a question of all confidence or no confidence at all. If the traveller is "worth his salt" he will not submit to nagging; if he is not, no amount of writing or forcing will ever make him earn even his expenses.

The mental strain under which the traveller's work must be done, should always be borne in mind by his employer. The feeling of responsibility is more wearing to him than to any one concerned. He knows that much is expected of him, and if he meets with poor success the conscientious traveller always suffers from depression. On his trip the thought is always present that he must perform an adequate day's work, despite the delays occasioned by inconsiderate customers who fail to keep engagements promptly or put off business until the eleventh hour or by many other circumstances over which he has absolutely no control.

Let us take as an illustration a day's work of a traveller on a western trip: He has travelled from New York to his first stop at X, where we find him packing his trunks so as to be ready to take the night train for Y, which he expects to reach early the next morning. Before retiring to his bunk in the railway train he writes out some late orders and a report to his firm. In Y he must lay out his samples and call on three dealers, which he hopes to accomplish in a day by hard work, so that he may continue his journey to Z. He reaches Y in time, takes the 'bus to the hotel, secures a sample room, opens his trunks and displays his books and other lines as effectively as possible. After breakfast he is ready for business. He calls on Mr. A, to whom he is well known and he consequently needs no introduction. Mr. A agrees to call at the hotel early, say at ten o'clock, because he has another engagement later in the day. The traveller next calls on Mr. B, a new man, to whom he must introduce himself and make known his business. Mr. B after some vacillation also hits upon ten o'clock. As it is inadvisable to deal with

with much tact and after some masterful fencing induces Mr. B to defer his call until two o'clock in the afternoon. His next visit is to Mr. C, who regrets that he has no time that day, but may drop in the next morning. After some diplomatic handling Mr. C is persuaded to call that afternoon not later than four o'clock. Mr. A keeps his appointment promptly; Mr. B is an hour late, and, in general, proves himself an obstinate and procrastinating customer; while Mr. C rushes in at almost the last hour. We need not point out that no matter how skilful a traveller may be he will be lucky if under such circumstances he is able to cover this part of the field with satisfaction to himself and his employers, re-pack his trunks, write out his orders, and make connections with the next stand according to his schedule. If he failed in this particular instance—by no means an exceptional one—uncomplimentary criticism from home certainly would not mend the matter or help the traveller out of a similar fix another time.

The traveller must be permitted to judge of the course to take in an emergency. If necessary, it is better to miss a train than to intrude upon a dealer who is out of humor, or who is busy with customers. The man who is always in a hurry to finish up his work in a town and to get out of it as soon as possible will in a short time exhaust the patience of even his most complacent customers. It seldom pays to force things. The traveller cannot hope to finish his business transaction with a customer every time at the first call or interview. A great deal may often depend upon leaving a certain customer at the right time and taking him up again on another occasion. Very likely the customer may have a grievance against the house that it may take hours of the traveller's time to straighten out. It is perhaps a matter over which he may have no control, or belong to a department of which he knows nothing; nevertheless, inasmuch as he is the only representative of the house whom the customer can get at personally, the traveller must bear the brunt of the saved-up wrath, and employ all the diplomacy at his command to straighten out the difficulty and to restore peace of mind to his customer, even if for a moment all his operations come to a standstill. Next to the customer with a grievance the cranky customer gives the traveller much trouble, and often causes him to lose time. This kind of man does not mean to cause the traveller any annoyance, but he succeeds nevertheless in blocking his progress. Rude and ungentlemanly customers are diffi-

cult to handle; yet, as the majority of these are cowards, the superior traveller will have no trouble in keeping them in their places; indeed, it not unfrequently happens that they are made to be ashamed of their conduct, and, while they may not reform in general, they will cease troubling the particular man whose "game is humanity."

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER.

It not unfrequently happens, when a successful commercial traveller's record for sales is discussed by his competitors, that some one will explain that "any man can sell when he has the right stuff to handle." To a limited extent this may be true; but how far it is from being the whole truth every buyer will be ready to admit at once. An indifferent, or rather, let us say, an unqualified travelling salesman, will almost invariably fail to make the utmost out of a good article; while, on the other hand, the right man will make a success out of something that his less competent competitor would look upon as a "forlorn hope."

It is impossible to define clearly what makes one man more successful as a salesman on the road than another, because the qualities of the men who stand out distinct from the mass of their fellows are more easily recognized than described. There is something of the same subtle influence about the successful commercial traveller that surrounds certain speakers who exercise a magnetic control over their hearers from the first to the last word. It is felt at the first grip of the hand of such a man; the customer is drawn to him at once, and his knowledge and judgment are trusted almost implicitly. There springs up by degrees between the buyer and the salesman a sort of free-masonry that leads the buyer to feel that he is in safe hands. And so he is; for while sharp in a deal—when it becomes a question of wit against wit—such a salesman as we have in mind would press his opponent to the wall if necessary; in a transaction where mutual trust is an element, he would spurn to take an advantage of an inexperienced buyer.

What this occult something is—whether it is an animal or a spiritual quality; whether it is, acquired or is inherent in the man; or whether it is constitutional, something physical and something mental combined—who can define it! Only this much can be definitely affirmed: the successful salesman is always

a personable and an intellectual man. Whatever his stature or his girth, whether gay and sparkling, or inclined to solemnity, he is always impressive. As to manners—he is a gentleman always, and tactful, knowing at a glance when and how to approach his man. Bluff to the bluff; suave where suavity is required; but courteous and dignified with all. And, lastly, he believes in the goods he sells, whether it be books, stationery, or tin ware. It is a pleasure to see such a man handle a sample—it teaches respect for the goods, as his presence inspires confidence. Can "any man sell when he has the right stuff to handle?" We are inclined to doubt it.

THE TEST OF A TRAVELLER'S SELLING CAPACITY.

The ever-increasing enterprise of commercial travellers, the fact that a superior class of men is more and more called into requisition in that business, the development of travelling facilities which make it possible for them to cover each year a wider field, and the overweening ambition of travelling men to report as large bills as possible to their employers, have led to a change in the book business that is not altogether profitable in the long run. We refer to the massing of orders upon special bills of new books at extra discounts for large quantities. It is much easier to push a customer to a thousand dollar order for the "leaders" of a season, at an extra discount, than to make up such an amount on the standard books scattered through a publisher's list. Yet, after all, the real success of the publishing business rests on the continuity of sale of the standard books.

"Leaders," to a very large extent, push themselves; and as they are the very ones on which the underseller makes his "drives," the bookseller has very little advantage on these lines over the underselling trade. Even the extra discount has little value because the bookseller dealing in such books knows that he must sacrifice a certain part of it to compete with the unreasonable dealers who scale their prices down to the minimum. But on standards and stand-bys the case is altogether different. A "leader" is famous or notorious at the moment, and the customer who wants it comes in and asks for it. A standard, however, or, let us say, a good book, of solid literary merit, that has survived the rush of the hour and modestly holds its own in the estimation of those who value literature for its own sake, is sold largely because the bookseller offers it at the right time and in the right way.

And the bookseller obtains knowledge of its true worth, quite as often as not, through the medium of the commercial traveller who knows his list beyond the length of his nose. Trade is thus actually increased by good bookselling, and the publisher feels the benefit of it.

The real test of a commercial traveller's success, therefore, ought to be not in big "drives" on special lines, but on large, well-assorted orders, which will stimulate the bookseller to do the best for publishers all along the lines of their publications. And if the bookseller, on his part, will only realize it, it is in this direction alone that his profit lies. It is here that the bookseller is beyond the competition of most of the miscellaneous stores; and it is here that he does a real service for the community, for which the community, with occasional shabby exceptions, is ready to pay the qualified bookseller a fair return.

THE TRAVELLER'S RELATIONS TO HIS CUSTOMERS.

Cheerfulness is most requisite in a travelling salesman—cheerfulness even to joviality—and to make his business friends equally cheerful, should be among the traveller's chief objects. It is often carelessly said that there should be no friendship in business, or, that there can be no friendship in business; yet it is a matter of fact, that the Anglo-Saxon is ruled as much by custom and sentiment as by law. Of course, if we adopt the narrow view that business is to make a sale without respect to the right or well being of the buyer or seller, then there can be no friendship in business; but if we take the broader view that good business is that only which contributes to the prosperity and advantage of all parties concerned then it will be found that not only can business and friendship co-exist, but that it is difficult to maintain a mutually satisfactory business relationship unless the element of friendship forms part of the bond.

Friendship is defined by Webster as "an attachment to a person proceeding from intimate acquaintance, and a reciprocation of kind offices, or from a favorable opinion of the amiable and respectable qualities of his mind." The buying and selling of goods from which the buyer and seller both profit is undeniably "a reciprocation of kind offices." And if an "intimate acquaintance" results, and a reciprocal "favorable opinion of the amiable and respectable qualities of the mind" is formed, who will say that

there can be no friendship in business? Indeed, the broad, liberal spirit of Commerce is not inimical to, but thoroughly in accord with that friendship which directly results from a "reciprocation of kind offices, or from a favorable opinion of the amiable and respectable qualities of the mind."

We doubt whether there are many business men, even among those who protest to the contrary, who are not more or less influenced, directly or indirectly, in their business transactions by friendship for the men who represent the houses with whom they deal. How often is not a point strained to favor a traveller who has won the friendship of the dealer; while on the other hand advantage is taken of the very circumstance overcome in the case just referred to, to "turn down" a *persona non grata*. Every traveller knows how strong this sentiment and custom is in favor of old houses of repute, which have a position and a prestige that of themselves command a certain amount of respect and confidence, and how difficult it is for young houses to conquer this prejudice and to win a place for themselves. The young traveller who loses sight of the fact that friendship plays an important part in business will quickly find that he is at a disadvantage with those rivals who do make friends of their customers.

APPROACHING A BUYER.

So much depends upon a first impression, whether in approaching a customer as an entire stranger, or for the first time after a longer or shorter absence, that, unless the traveller is correct in his approach, and perfectly at ease, all his subsequent efforts may be rendered void in the one case, or, in the other, he may only with difficulty be able to come into touch again with an old acquaintance. The subject is therefore well worth studying closely.

Many men who are new to the business imagine they must adopt methods suitable to each customer. This were desirable enough if it were possible of accomplishment; but it is not possible for the simple reason that to follow such a course successfully would require histrionic qualifications of a higher order than the average man possesses. The safer course to follow is to be natural. Assuming, of course, that the candidate for a position on the road is a gentleman, either by birth or training, that his deportment is dignified and quiet, and that he is able to talk well, he may depend upon making the best impression on

his customer by acting in a natural manner. A cold and reserved nature may possibly be obliged to thaw out a little, and a boisterous, impetuous one may find it necessary to repress itself; but otherwise neither temperament need do violence to itself. A man's deportment or his address, inasmuch as it be original with himself, will thus become a special mark by which he will be known and distinguished from his fellow men. The more favorable he can make that mark, the more successful he will be, of course. Every traveller frequently meets men who require special handling, but the deviation in treatment should always be along the lines of his personal nature.

The unapproachable man very often is only a bugaboo; but if there should ever be found a man intrenched in the position of buyer whom no ingenuity, tact, or ability can draw out, or upon whom the most specious arguments and most irreproachable address can make no impression, who, in short, has no opening in his armor through which a vulnerable spot may be touched, the only treatment to give such an one is—a wide berth. But though we have now and then heard of such, we have always received reports of their absolute unapproachableness with mental reservation. There are no doubt surly, disagreeable curmudgeons in high places who delight in torturing those who they know cannot afford to retaliate. But absolutely and completely unapproachable buyers are figments of the brain—myths—impossible. There is no one in business whom it is impossible to approach, or whose confidence, even, it is impossible to gain, provided one steadily studies his idiosyncrasies and perseveres in the effort to get at him.

One of the most difficult things a young traveller must learn is to manage his temper, in fact to have it under perfect control under all circumstances. Every man who bears responsibilities is at times tried beyond his measure of strength, and must let off steam somehow. A mean soul in such straits will kick his dog, or quarrel with his subordinates; another will fill the air with profanity; and still another will bark at those who wish to do him a favor. A traveller who is unfortunate enough to intrude himself upon a buyer under any of these circumstances will find himself in a painful position, and if he is unable to preserve his equanimity will perhaps close a door upon himself for a long time. "A soft answer turneth away wrath," in most cases; if the proverb for once should fail in its effi-

cacy, it would be better for the traveller to take his departure with all respect and civility, preserving an unruffled demeanor to the end. However much he may be tried, the man on the road cannot afford to quarrel with his bread and butter by resenting unfriendly treatment. In this connection it might be well to remember the saw attributed to Benjamin Franklin, "A gentleman will not, and any other cannot insult me."

Whether the traveller succeeds in doing business or not, it is of the utmost importance that he leaves behind him a good and lasting impression; so that, at his subsequent visits, he may find a man at least disposed to give him a hearing. It is not likely that a traveller will succeed in interesting a buyer the first time, or that, for that matter, he will succeed in selling him a bill of goods at the end of a half dozen calls. Yet it will be fatal if the traveller shows his disappointment in a way that may give offence. There are many reasons why a man will not buy, and any of these or no reason at all must satisfy the traveller. But let him persevere and come up the next time as smiling as before, and the chances are that the buyer in time will become interested enough in his caller to at least take an interest in what he has to offer.

KNOWING WHEN TO SELL.

An important element of the science of salesmanship is knowing when to sell. It is very much like fishing. As the expert angler knows the danger of precipitantly pulling in his fish the moment he bites, so the expert salesman must also learn that it is not wise to "pull in" a customer every time he comes in sight. The young commercial traveller who is apt to be overzealous, and some older ones, too, we regret to say, who are enterprising in wrong directions, seem to think that the customer is legitimate game wherever and whenever he may be found. The accidental meeting with a customer anywhere outside of his business place, either at home or abroad, does not warrant the traveller's troubling him for orders. When a traveller meets a customer away from his place of business or his home he will do well not to introduce business topics unless he wants to be rated a bore and take the risk of damaging his future relations with the buyer. Of course, there are some strenuous customers who talk "shop" in their sleep, and who revel in doing business all the time and in every place; in such cases the traveller must follow suit; but even in these

exceptional cases he will do well not to take the lead.

While it is very likely never safe to intrude business upon a man when off duty, it also happens at times that when a buyer is at business it may not always be wise to approach him with a business proposition. A traveller's sensitiveness, or, rather, his instinct, must prompt him to discern whether the man he is approaching is *en rapport* with him. If he appears to be busy, or worried, or out of sorts, in short if he seems to be in no mood for entertaining travellers, it might be well to defer the call and "double back" on him later in the day. No doubt time may be lost in doing so, but it would be better to lose time than to irritate a customer. If a traveller under such circumstances has brought himself to the attention of the buyer before he becomes aware of his mistake, he must get through with his business in the shortest possible time, and retire good humoredly if his errand has been in vain. Persistence in such a case would be worse than useless.

When is the opportune moment, and under what conditions may a traveller hope to meet with the greatest success, are questions to which no ready-made answer may be given. The best time for selling goods is when the buyer is free; when, for the moment, he has nothing else on hand. It must be the traveller's aim to watch these favorable opportunities to strengthen his connection. If that be not always possible, he must approach the subject with all the tact at his command and take his chances.

KNOWING WHETHER A CUSTOMER WILL BUY.

Next to knowing when to sell, it is of great importance for a commercial traveller to learn the signs which indicate approximately whether or not a man will buy, and when to take "no" for an answer. The signs are many and varying, and experience very often goes for little in dealing with this phase of making a sale except to prompt the beginner to hesitate to take even a point-blank refusal literally. It is as natural for the buyer to hesitate before laying in new stock as it should be natural for the commercial traveller to be keen to sell his new lines. In these days of making so many new books the bookseller from season to season is ever more at his wits' end where to draw the line, and his first impulse is to "turn down" the traveller. Indeed, some buyers, unconsciously, get into the habit of saying "no" to every new proposition, and wait to "be shown." In such cases, un-

less a man is absolute master of his line, and can meet objections with valid arguments, he will very likely suffer defeat, not because the bookseller will not buy new books some time during that season, but because the traveller either cannot break through the buyer's holding back, or interest him in what he has to sell, or cannot convince him of the wisdom of reasonableness in making the investment.

The important thing in dealing with the backward customer, of course, is to interest him. The representative of an important house which publishes certain lines that every bookseller must know, if not keep in stock, will have less difficulty in interesting a buyer than one who represents a house of minor importance, to whom, and especially to the beginner on the road, these remarks are chiefly addressed. Such a representative has a new book or a new line to bring to the attention of a bookseller who will fight as long as possible against putting in stock another new and untried proposition. How shall he get a hearing unless he is able to excite the buyer's curiosity; and after having aroused sufficient interest in his proposition, how shall he be able to sell his book unless he is able to convince the buyer that the investment is a safe one. Here, then, are two points to be gained before the sale may be consummated—to excite interest, and to bring conviction home of the profitableness of the purchase. The first point is the very A B C of the traveller's profession; the second point forms the sum and substance of all salesmanship. The first depends upon certain inborn qualities and certain cultivation; the second upon character, upon the science of selling, and, to some degree, upon the goods. Taking these qualifications for granted, the traveller must further learn to handle the unwilling customer—a difficult task, but with the aid of tact and observation, by no means an impossible one. He must be quick to note the first sign of hesitancy on the buyer's part, as the faintest indication of wavering often shows that the buyer's mind is not definitely or irrevocably made up. He must watch every shadow that crosses the buyer's face as he presses home his strong points, and if he is a close observer he cannot fail to perceive whether he is making an impression. Not until the buyer says positively and decisively that he will not buy should the canvass be given up. The emphasis, the gesture, the resolute tone that distinguishes the ultimate decision from the vacillating attitude of the undecided buyer is not easily mistaken. The real secret lies in the ability of the traveller

to discriminate between a succession of "nos" that may be converted into "yes," and the real, final and positive refusal. The line of distinction is oftentimes nearly imperceptible, or so apparently non-existent as to deceive the old and experienced hand. Therefore, although a traveller may not hope to become infallible in his discernment, he may reduce his errors of judgment to a minimum, and by studying the matter carefully may frequently be able to know correctly whether or not a man will buy.

SELLING FROM SAMPLES.

Compared with the representatives of other trades, the travellers for most publishing houses in this country are at a disadvantage in so far as they are not able to show complete or satisfactory samples of their latest lines. Indeed, it has at times seemed to us, looking at the subject from the drummer's point of view, as though the American booktrade was approaching its latter end, and was to be carried off on a "stretcher." The business of bookselling in this respect threatens to be fast lapsing into desuetude, and the traveller is obliged more and more to rely for the success of his trips—as the retailer is for his sales to the public—upon the color and showiness of sample covers rather than upon their contents; so far has this got to be the fact that books are not to any great extent shown even by advance sheets, but simply foreshadowed in sample covers made together in long strips that peel out like an accordion under the significant title of "stretcher." In rare cases a dummy is available, and this very likely is made up only of one signature of text, with an illustration or two, and enough pages of blank paper to show the probable thickness of the finished book. In such cases, more frequently than not, the cover itself is without lettering or decoration.

Under present international copyright requirements, making necessary simultaneous publication here and in England, and owing to other circumstances that subject the publication, especially of a book of foreign origin, to more or less delay, it may not always be possible to provide travellers with completed copies of forthcoming books. Whatever may be the cause, the effect certainly is well nigh disastrous to all concerned. The traveller in bringing such books to the attention of the retailer is obliged to depend upon generalities rather than upon arguments which he should be able to re-enforce with ocular proof. In the case of new customers,

or those with whom the traveller may not yet be closely acquainted, he is to a certain extent without a point of contact so far as those books are concerned of which he is able to show only the covers or a dummy containing simply a signature or two of text. There is certainly room here for reform—a reform that will benefit seller and buyer and relieve the intermediary of a great deal of strain, the release from which would enable him to give more time and better attention to the canvass of his other books.

The necessity for carrying samples of one's lines is every year becoming more evident, and, wherever the business warrants it, it is advisable and even highly essential, that as much stock as possible should be carried and shown. When a buyer has an opportunity of testing what he is buying it will do much more towards convincing him than the most perfect illustrations or flowery descriptions. Not only will the carrying of samples be likely to result in more business, but the oftener a traveller handles his wares the more familiar does he become with their nature and characteristics, and, as a consequence, the better able he is to speak of them. Moreover, the time occupied by the buyer in looking at samples is of great value to the salesman, in so far as it enables him to gain, as it were, a little breathing time in which to gather his forces and prepare for attack.

BREVITY IN SELLING GOODS.

If "brevity is the soul of wit," brevity in these days of rush and strenuousness certainly is the very essence of business. To concentrate the mind upon the subject in hand; to formulate an argument in the fewest possible words, each one lucid, direct and convincing; to get at, and through, business without circumlocution, is the *sine qua non* of salesmanship on the road. In the store the salesman has a certain amount of latitude in dealing with his customers. He is expected, within reason, of course, to devote himself entirely to the buyers. If one buyer be loquacious, the salesman cannot afford to be abrupt or curt; if another be a "rusher," the salesman must have his wits about him and be as alert as his customer. In any case he must keep the pace set for him by his customers, be it deliberate or at the rate of a mile a minute. The traveller, on the other hand, inasmuch as he usually deals with busy men, to whom every moment has an actual value, and to whom, therefore, lengthy dissertations on the subject in hand, or digressions on matter for-

eign to the subject, would be decidedly unwelcome, must study to present his propositions as concisely and lucidly as language will permit, and as briefly as may be compatible with good breeding. Brevity in transacting business on the road is desirable for two reasons—it gives satisfaction to the man who takes pleasure in dealing with clean-cut, alert and active salesmen, and it doesn't give the slow buyer too long a time to consider.

While a good "gift of gab" is generally considered to be a desirable attribute in a traveller, it is unquestionably true that quality in speech and not quantity will command the greatest success. The ideal to attain is the ability to talk well rather than to talk much. We recall a number of cases in which a drummer was fairly on the way to land a good order, but because he did not realize that the sale had already reached a climax, so belabored his customer with useless argument that the spell he had begun to weave was broken, and with the return of the buyer's calmer judgment the order was based on a minimum estimate instead of the maximum that surely seemed in sight.

Much talk, also, often leads to exaggeration and deprecation. Unnecessary or extravagant commendation of one's own line is as offensive as the disparaging of an opponent's goods. Of course, it goes without saying that a traveller's own house, his goods, his prices and his employers are the best; that it is a pleasure to work for such a house, and that it ought to be a privilege to buy from such a house. But while a born or cultivated salesman must somehow make himself believe these things, he must let some of them be taken for granted by his customers. By the same token he also must not harp on either the bad or the good qualities of his competitor's lines. "Brethren," an old minister once said, "there is only one perfect woman in this world—and every man in this congregation thinks he's got her." That is the principle upon which a traveller should act.

A business man whose young representative in the field, in his discouragement when writing home, dwelt unnecessarily long on the doings of his competitors, gave the following excellent though vigorous advice:

"Bob Ingersoll once said that a 'fool friend' was one who always saw the bad things in his own political party and all the good things in the other, and who never by any chance saw the good things on his own side and the bad ones on the other. Now, don't you be a 'fool friend' in this business.

"I want to give you one word of good advice: Drop the other fellows. Don't carry

them about in your mind. Don't take them into the houses where you sell goods. Don't quote them to the buyers. Don't say anything against them or against their goods. Forget them. If the buyer talks about them, edge the conversation gently over to other matters, even though it be football. Then work it back to your own goods as soon as you can, and keep it there."

SUGGESTION VS. ADVICE IN SELLING.

It is a peculiar trait of human nature that while most people are ready enough at all times and under all circumstances to give advice, few think they are in need of it, and resent the very imputation that they might profit by it. A salesman, above all a commercial traveller, must therefore study closely how to discriminate between advising and suggesting. Advice, especially if given unasked, is apt to be regarded as arrogance; and frequently it amounts to such, inasmuch as the salesman takes it upon himself to give counsel to the buyer, thereby arrogating to himself a superior knowledge—always offensive to the buyer, who not unnaturally may retort with, "What do you mean by coming here to teach me my business? Don't I know best what to buy and what to 'turn down,'" etc.

Possibly the buyer is wrong; but whether he is right or wrong, the traveller must strictly guard against saying or doing the slightest thing that could be construed into an attempt to teach the man his business. Every one thinks that he knows best how to conduct his own affairs, or how to run his department; and as some men are super-sensitive on this point, the act of advising may profitably be discarded in favor of the milder and more acceptable mode of suggestion. To insinuate an idea by indirect association is a more agreeable operation than trying to knock that idea into a customer's head with a hammer. The line of demarcation between advice and suggestion is sufficiently broad to be noticeable, and he who strictly observes it will run little risk of ruffling a sensitive client.

Indecision on a buyer's part is one of the most common—though none the less formidable—obstacles to making sales against which a traveller must contend. Especially is this the case in presenting new lines. Judicious promptings and tactful suggestions will no doubt assist a buyer to the point of ordering; and yet a sale may not be effected because of the buyer's inability to make up his mind definitely as to quantities and proportions. Here the temptation is to "play off" one customer against another by quoting the quanti-

ties already sold to the buyer's competitors. In most cases of which we have knowledge we have found that "comparisons are odious," and that quoting the purchases of one buyer to another more often defeats the object aimed at than it helps to reach it. Where there is any doubt in the buyer's mind it will be the better policy for the salesman to assist his customer to make up his mind definitely on a trial order on new lines rather than to push him to "the limit." In pushing old lines it will be helpful if the salesman can produce his record of the quantities ordered of a given book since it was first brought out. A buyer is apt to forget the exact number sold of any particular book, and if the salesman is able to point out, on the spot, that his order on the salesman's former visit for a certain book was a given quantity, and that since then the buyer had ordered on such and such dates certain other quantities, the total amounting to blank dozens or hundreds, the buyer will not only be assisted in making his calculations on further orders, but will very likely be flattered besides in being led to think that his particular interests are being looked after so carefully. An order book of this kind, if properly kept up to date, should be useful to the salesman in many ways, namely, in keeping informed on his customer's line of trade, his capacity, etc., as well as serving as a guide to the salesman's work, in making comparison of business done currently with that of former years, etc.

In this connection we may touch on the subject of building up and increasing orders. Elsewhere we have spoken of the advisability of discouraging rather than prodding certain customers to order beyond their capacity. This advice still holds good. But there are buyers whose tendency is to order the smallest possible number of certain standard lines notwithstanding the fact that they are likely to need more in the future. Very often, too, a buyer who has so many items to think of may actually be in the position of not knowing at the moment what he does want. In such cases it will be well to allow the buyer to go through the lines without interruption, and after he thinks he has exhausted the list to return to those of which he may have ordered under his needs, or to those he may have overlooked altogether, and endeavor to build up or order the lines passed by. The whole art of suggesting and building up orders is a very interesting one, and when properly studied and developed will enable the traveller to materially increase his returns.

ETIQUETTE ON THE ROAD.

Like most other callings, that of the commercial traveller has its rules of etiquette, which, though unwritten, should nevertheless be considered binding by all who expect consideration from others, in short, by every gentleman. One of the most rigorous of these unwritten laws is that which requires one traveller to leave a fellow traveller undisturbed while engaged with a customer. An old hand hardly needs to be reminded of this; but the beginner at the very start should be made to realize the importance of allowing to the man in possession of the field full and free scope, undisturbed by the intrusion of his rivals. A traveller, to a certain extent, may guard himself against unfriendly intruders when receiving his customer at his hotel. In a measure he is also likely to be protected in large establishments where certain days, even hours, are set apart for the reception of travellers. But in an open store, where the traveller is obliged to transact his business practically in view of the whole establishment, and where his customer is liable to have his attention distracted more or less by calls from his patrons or inquiries from his assistants, it would be ill-bred in a rival to add to the difficulties of his competitor.

It happens not unfrequently—very likely through thoughtlessness rather than through malice—that the "butting-in" of another traveller takes the buyer's attention away from a business proposition at precisely that psychological moment when a straw would turn the balance either way. It is extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible, in such a case to get the buyer back again to the point where the connection was broken off, and the interrupting of a sale, especially when nearing completion, cannot but prove annoying to the man who is soliciting business.

If on entering a store the traveller should find a rival engaged with his prospective customer, it is but fair that he should withdraw as quickly and as quietly as possible, with an apology if his intrusion has been noticed. If it seems desirable to remain in the store, the one waiting his turn should make himself as inconspicuous as possible. The necessity for this will be apparent when it is considered that a buyer when he becomes conscious of the fact that other travellers are waiting to make demands upon his time, may become fidgety or worried, and dismiss the man with whom he is engaged for the time being, either empty-handed or with less consideration than he might be apt to give him if he felt under

no immediate obligation to give a share of his time to other salesmen in sight. There may be but one excuse for interfering in such a case, and that is when a traveller shows an unmistakable intention to "stand off" his rivals by prolonging his interview and therefore unduly monopolizing the buyer's time. In such a case the waiting traveller who wishes to keep another appointment, or catch a particular train, may be pardoned for betraying impatience and making his presence known to his prosy friend; but even in such extreme cases it would be better if the matter could be settled with the inconsiderate traveller without annoying the buyer, because such a course might react disagreeably upon the one whose turn comes next.

If a traveller commits an indiscretion by breaking in upon another traveller, he would commit something short of a crime were he to interrupt his customer while endeavoring to make a sale himself. It would be better in such a case to abandon the field for that trip altogether, even though such a course might mean a loss to the traveller. If while engaged with a buyer one of his customers claims his attention the traveller should promptly and cheerfully retire—temporarily of course—in favor of such a client, no matter how interesting the stage, or how critical the point which his sale may have reached, bearing in mind that a man's customers have the first claim on his attention and take precedence over others in all cases. The very fact of showing readiness on such an occasion will predispose the buyer in favor of the one making the concession; and anything that tends to create pleasant relations between buyer and seller must be cultivated, regardless of every other consideration.

BORROWING MONEY "ON THE ROAD."

The editor of *The Iron Age* once said: "Of all the errors that a travelling salesman can make, the most fatal is to borrow money from his customers." That is a truth that men new in the business would do well to firmly impress on their memories. It is quite enough to ask a customer to cash a check received from the house, that can be added to the day's deposit at the bank, and thus keep the cash balance intact; it is presuming upon good nature to ask a customer to cash a draft upon the house, even though there is no danger of its being dishonored; but it certainly amounts to business suicide to negotiate a straight loan. Merchants have no money to lend to their business associates; and, while

probably many will, with seeming willingness, help a man with whom their relations may be cordial, they will be very apt to remember distinctly the date upon which payment was promised, and will expect payment—indeed, even insist upon getting back their money, and in default put their debtor in a position that may permanently injure his interests. Even when payment is made promptly, the lender may have a feeling of uneasiness that the first transaction may have others in its train that might not end so favorably; hence, there will be a strained relation that will not help either side very much.

A travelling salesman should guard his personal credit as jealously as his reputation for fair dealing. The man whose manner and bearing indicate that he is in no need of favors has no occasion to ask for them—they come to him unasked; but let the same man once show himself "hard up," and try to borrow money, his well-fed and groomed appearance will avail him little. He will ever afterward be regarded as a man liable to call for assistance, and one who is to be kept at a distance. Better, even when but temporarily and for good reason embarrassed, to write home, to borrow from a fellow-salesman, or to "stand off" the hotel keeper and go out of town upon the bumpers of a freight train, than importune a customer at the risk of straining relations with him and losing his friendly regard.

BREAKING NEW GROUND.

The breaking of new ground may be said to be the very *crux* of the commercial traveller's profession, and is without doubt the greatest task he can undertake. Indeed, a man who can successfully create a new field must, of necessity, have selling powers of a high order, and should be fit for anything in his line. When one realizes the difficulty of keeping a connection already formed, where the salesman is well known and the firm he represents is thoroughly established, it will be apparent that the man who has neither of these advantages must have stupendous difficulties to overcome. It takes years of hard work to form a sound connection; but some one must be the first to introduce the goods.

Such a task is not likely to fall to the lot of a representative of any publishing house, new or old; yet in the line of his routine work every traveller is expected to turn aside to work up new trade in the districts that he visits regularly, or that may have sprung up in neighborhoods bordering on his route. A glance at the changes that take

place in the book trade during any one year must convince even the most superficial observer of the importance of watching the whole field—that which is growing as well as that already established. During one year of which we have record, there were reported the opening of upwards of seventy new book stores throughout the country; fifty-six booksellers sold out or went into bankruptcy, and one hundred and fifty book stores were taken over by new proprietors. With the fifty odd book stores that were closed out for one reason or another, the traveller, of course, need not concern himself; but he is confronted with the problem of making friends and patrons of more than two hundred new booksellers, nearly every one of whom may be an entire stranger to him. In some respects, this is a most pleasant and interesting task, and, if the traveller is alive to his opportunities, it may also prove a profitable one.

It seems desirable that on each trip a certain time allowance should be made to enable the traveller to work up new trade along his regular route. A first or even a second call may prove fruitless; but if the field is systematically and conscientiously followed up results are certain to follow. Indeed, it is often surprising what a high proportion of success results from nursing prospects. Needless to say, that anything that shows even the smallest percentage of a prospect should be followed up promptly and resolutely, otherwise the effect may die away, and the work will have to be gone over again.

The guiding principle in breaking new ground is to see every man who is likely to buy, and, in justice to his house and to himself, the traveller should endeavor to do this faithfully. The man he may miss may probably be the one who would have bought, and this the traveller cannot know unless he calls upon him. In breaking new ground, therefore, two main features should be ever present to the traveller—to get an audience with every man who handles his line of goods, and to economize his time to the full. Otherwise he cannot leave the territory conscientiously feeling that he has taken everything possible off the ground.

CHANGING BERTHS.

Changing travellers from season to season is a mistake, and so is transferring them to different sections after acquaintance has once been formed. It is a great mistake also—often made by the man himself—to change

houses as frequently as some do, often for some trivial cause, more frequently for no other reason than to make a change. There are a few things to be learned sooner or later by every bumptious young man who considers himself just a shade better qualified to judge of business affairs and what is to the interest of the business than his employer, even if he has had the extended experience of a first trip. One of these things is that few men are discharged without some just cause. If he is discharged he may be able to persuade the friends that he has made to accept his side of the story; when he makes a second change his friends may begin to suspect that some of the fault may lie with him; while the third time, even if this time he may be entirely without blame, he is apt to be left out in the cold. Here the rule applies: Be sincere. Don't try to fool your constituents, because they will not be fooled—at least not all the time. An average collection of men can usually tell the difference between an honest man and a pretender. The test of a man in business is whether he is honest or not—conscientiously, broadly honest, we mean, not alone honest in the legal sense of the word. No dishonest man can pass through the world for any length of time undetected, nor will the honest man be long mistaken for a fakir.

Besides being honest a traveller must aim to be cheerful and optimistic. He has many hardships to put up with, many trials to undergo, many unpleasant duties to perform—all who have had experience on the road know that and are ready to admit it—but that is no reason why he should add to his misery and to the discomfort of his employers, his customers and his friends, by complaining and making himself disagreeable. Nor will it help him any to change his berth, if his relations with his employers are agreeable, because the conditions against which he has to contend remain unchanged no matter under which flag he elects to fight.

AUTHORITY OF COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS.

Travelling salesmen are agents subject in the main to the laws of agency. Established principles, modified by general and known customs, therefore, govern them, and, for the most part, determine their authority. If it were otherwise, no one could feel safe in dealing with them.

The authority of the travelling salesman is either expressed or implied—often it is both. The expressed authority is that conferred by

the employer's word of mouth or writing; the implied authority is that which must be inferred from the very nature of the employment of the agent, in the absence of expressed authority for its execution.

Neither the fact of their agency nor the extent of their authority can be proved by the declarations of those claiming to be the agents of others. They must be proved by something that emanates from the business houses that send them out to represent them. As a rule, all who deal with agents are bound at their peril to see that they have authority, and, if it is in writing, to inform themselves of its extent and to inquire into its limitations. Mercantile houses, as well as other principals, are bound by the acts of their agents only so far as they are within the scope of their authority, although if they hold their agents out or permit them to hold themselves out, as having greater authority than has been expressly conferred upon them, they will be bound by any acts done as under such authority.

Authority given to salesmen to take orders is not necessarily authority to make sales. Nor does the nature of such employment indicate authority to cancel orders once taken, and to receive back goods shipped to customers on the ground that they are unsatisfactory; but persons sent out by mercantile houses to solicit orders for goods must, as to persons dealing with them, in the absence of any notice to the contrary, be deemed to have authority to accept the orders, and to enter into contracts of sale binding on those who send them out, where that is the general usage in the business, and more especially where it is shown that such sales previously entered into by the agents in question have been recognized repeatedly by their employers. It has even been held that foreign manufacturers who employ agents to solicit orders are bound by a general custom that authorizes such agents to accept orders without conference with their principals, although they may have no actual knowledge of such a custom.

When goods are given into the custody of persons whose common business is to sell, without limiting their authority, implied authority to sell such goods is thereby conferred. Moreover, according to an Illinois decision, purchasers may be justified in assuming that travelling salesmen have authority even to sell their samples, possession being regarded as a more important element in determining their authority than the fact that the goods

are samples. In Colorado and Texas, on the other hand, sales of samples by travelling salesmen authorized to show them and to take orders have been held not to be binding on their principals in the absence of any evidence of a custom or usage authorizing a sale of samples by them.

Where travelling salesmen require the use of teams in order to do the business of their employers they may hire them upon the credit of their employers; nor is this power taken away by the fact that their employers have supplied them with money and instructed them not to pledge their credit, where the liverymen who let the teams are not aware of such instructions. It is different with regard to incurring hotel bills. They are usually paid in cash, and travelling salesmen have no implied authority to have their employers charged with them.

Travelling salesmen employed merely to take orders have no implied authority to receive payments on the same. Payments made to them at the time the orders are given, or afterward, are not binding on their principals. Authority to sell goods on credit does not imply any authority to collect for them afterward. Exceptions to the general rule are, however, found in Maine and Tennessee, where travelling salesmen authorized to sell may collect the price in the absence of custom to the contrary, or actual knowledge by the buyers that their authority is limited. Possession of goods by travelling salesmen who sell them is evidence of authority to collect for them; but then they will not be presumed to have authority to receive anything but money in payment. Authority to sell is not authority to barter. Furthermore, a commission allowed to one who solicits orders upon sales effected through such orders does not constitute him or prove him to be an agent with authority to make absolute contracts of sale, much less to receive payments and make agreements to receive payments in other goods by way of exchange.

Authority to receive checks in lieu of cash in payment of bills placed in the hands of agents for collection does not authorize them to indorse and collect the checks. It follows that travelling salesmen, employed to sell and take orders for goods, to collect accounts and receive money and checks payable to the order of their principals are not by implication authorized to indorse the names of such principals to such checks. Neither have travelling salesmen any implied authority to draw bills of exchange on customers, payable to

their own order, and to obtain acceptance and payment thereof.

HOTEL KEEPERS MAY SEIZE DRUMMER'S SAMPLES.

Judge Burpee, of Waterbury, Conn., in June, 1904, filed his decision in the city court of Waterbury in the case of the Royal Novelty Company vs. Mulcahy, giving judgment for the defendant to recover replevined goods and awarding damages of \$1 and costs. The case involves the interesting point of law as to whether or not a hotel keeper can seize a drummer's samples, the property of the company he represents. Proprietor Mulcahy, of the Broadway Hotel, of Waterbury, took this course in the case of a representative of the Royal Novelty Company that was stopping at his house. A transient of this kind, according to the law, is a guest and not a boarder, and the common law provides that goods of a guest can be seized. When Mr. Mulcahy took the drummer's samples the company recovered them in a suit of replevin. By Judge Burpee's decision the goods are the property of the hotel proprietor, and he also gets damages of \$1 and costs.

RAILWAY TICKETS AND HOTELS.

There are all sorts of ways and means by which a commercial traveller may arrange for his transportation, transfer of baggage, etc., that differ in almost every State of the Union, and for which no lasting rule can be laid down. In the days gone by, a traveller was able to save considerable money if he knew a friendly "scalper;" but his chances through this channel are now so slim that, as a rule, those who are obliged to travel "on time" must be content to use the thousand-mile tickets issued by the railway companies, or the so-called "Higbee ticket," good for five thousand miles over different lines of roads, enabling the traveller on one ticket to go from any point to any other point. The passenger pays full rate for his ticket, supplied with coupons, which, in most cases, he must sign in the presence of the conductor every time he boards a train. These coupons, when cancelled, are awarded a rebate by the company issuing the ticket at the rate of ten dollars each thousand miles. While this system involves a certain amount of red tape, it nevertheless saves time in making trains in a rush and during crowded hours.

As to hotels, it is safe to say the best is none too good—not so much from the viewpoint of personal comfort as for the tone it

lends to the house the traveller represents. In this respect, however, it may be necessary to compromise with one's dignity and resort to the next best; yet, unless it be "Hobson's choice," that is, if there be only one hotel in the town, it is never wise to put up at what is drastically referred to as a "cheap-and-nasty." In most hotels arrangements may be made for show rooms, so that the traveller is enabled during a longer or shorter stay to display his line undisturbed and "room" in another part of the hotel. It is perhaps superfluous to note in this connection that quarters at a hotel should be bespoke on the European plan, and that the "greenhorn" may ask of the clerk at what rates he is being entertained. False modesty in this particular might become expensive, inasmuch as travellers are usually entitled to a favored rate.

When stopping at "Commercials," that is, hotels frequented by commercial travellers, the young traveller, as well as the veteran, often finds opportunities that are offered nowhere else of coming into the closest touch with his colleagues. Indeed, in this way friendships are formed that endure a life time. And for this reason we would caution the novice against a too hasty judging of his new-found brethren and against stilted stiffness and cold formality. Among the commercial travellers there are wide divergences of characteristics; there necessarily must be such. Some members of the brotherhood shiver and shudder at the freedom of conversation sometimes carried on by its members after the labors of the day have ceased—men who have no appreciation of humor or wit—to whom the humor of a Sheridan, a Curran, Theodore Hook, Thomas Hood, or the well-known anecdotes of Dr. Abernethy and others, are as a foreign tongue, and associated with distasteful ideas and misunderstood lives. As in the outer world, so in the inner and smaller world of the fraternity of commercial travellers will be found representatives of narrow views, and well-meant but misplaced judgment of the acts and doings of those around them. If an individual does not smoke, there is no necessity for his giving statistics to prove that the money spent for tobacco might do much more good if spent in other directions, which may or may not be true. It all depends upon the point of view. The total abstainer—a good man, and one who often does a great deal of good work—need not be a bore to his fellow travellers. In many cases much good has been done by personal example in right living. But

it is dangerous to set up an "Ebenezer" for one's fellow men, in season and out of season. There is danger, as we have said, of such a man becoming a bore; and a bore, no matter how good his intention may be, is a nuisance not tolerated in any company.

PACKING AND LEAVING HOME.

After making up his route, the traveller turns his attention to packing the samples which he has selected with great care and judgment. In the end he will find that his eyes have been larger than the capacity of his trunks, and that discrimination is needed to get all within the available compass. Books must be packed solidly, and, after laboring for some time, it will often be found that room must be made for still other books that are needed. It may be necessary to pack and re-pack the trunk several times before all that is needed can be included, and often it may be necessary to carry one or two books in a grip or in the hand. After the traveller has actually started it may take a week or longer to discover just how his samples may be most advantageously stowed away. After that the work of unpacking and packing becomes a mere matter of routine.

At last the time comes for leaving home—for every conscientious man the most trying period of all his work. He passes out to face possible dangers, accidents, sickness and privations, leaving his family day by day anxiously watching his route. In some respects the family left behind by the traveller bears the harder portion of the separation. The traveller is kept busy all the time; he meets many old friends and forms new acquaintances who often smoothe the way for him; whereas those he has left at home miss the companionship of the absent one and are in daily dread of bad news. Of course, the traveller often must endure lonely hours at large hotels and elsewhere *en route* when, overwhelmed for the time with defeats or bodily ailments, he cannot come into touch with a kindred spirit with whom to exchange confidences. Yet new places and faces help him over the rough places, while those he leaves behind must meet their difficulties under the old surroundings, deprived of the counsel and aid of their breadwinner abroad.

THE FUTURE OF COMMERCIAL TRAVELLING.

As to the future of the commercial traveller we doubt whether the present generation need trouble themselves greatly over their probable future. The system of doing business through a representative on

the road has been and is still subject to the law of evolution and the strain of competition. Yet every step has been in the direction of improving not only the condition of the traveller, but in creating a higher class of representative than his predecessors. In all great changes some good in the old will be destroyed in making way for the new and greater benefit. Applying this to the subject in hand, we have no misgivings as to the future of the commercial traveller, for whenever a greater degree of intelligence is necessary a higher being is always evolved to carry on the work. The present-day traveller is in many respects by the aforementioned law a vastly superior man, and as the years roll on he will have still to submit to the inevitable, and move on, or he will be moved with the weak "to the wall," for every leading position in all large mercantile houses will require a closer and more intense application of all the faculties; the hours may be shorter, but the moments will be keener and more anxious; the business problems will be much more complex for the middle man and the merchant. It will therefore require a much more subtle mind and dexterous hand to bring about results satisfactory to both employers and employees. To no class of business men does this apply with greater force than to the commercial traveller, the great pioneer of all large trading operations, for upon his general intelligence and acumen, upon his power of conception and intrepidity of execution, very much depends. Hence, the men who have not grown and advanced with the times will be left a long way behind in the race, and those only will be able to retain their positions who can properly estimate and quickly adapt themselves to the ever-advancing and rapidly-changing circumstances, which will continue to influence and govern the entire conduct of the twentieth century commerce.

Under these altered conditions we must look to the young, pliable, industrious traveller to *make* a brilliant future for himself. There is no appointment in a house of business which offers such scope for large ideas and magnificent results, as the future of the travelling man, and we confidently recommend any man with a thorough knowledge of his business to select this work, with this proviso, that if he have all the gifts, all the qualifications of all the best men who have ever travelled combined, and lack that intense application, that determination to work year in and year out, he lacks the one thing needful above all others.

THE OLD BOOKTRADE.

THE trade in old books which to-day is carried on so extensively throughout the world, and which if properly, or rather scientifically, conducted, forms the most profitable branch of the book business, had its origin, strange to say, in modest, very often in contemptible, beginnings—in small, dark shops, in the hallways and areas of old buildings and in back yards. Dealers in old books exclusively were not known in Europe until well into the xviii century; the first known were established in Strassburg, where they were classed among the mongers. The regular bookseller only exceptionally offered worn or second-hand books for sale. Towards the end of the xviii century and during the next century, however, judging from the bulky catalogues issued by a number of German booksellers, the bulk of the stock offered by the regular booktrade consisted of books from private libraries.

Up to 1671 no bookseller in Germany was permitted to sell books by auction. In that year Christian Kirchner, of Leipzig, who acted as agent for Jansson and Blaeuw, important booksellers and auctioneers of Amsterdam, obtained the privilege of holding book auctions "according to the Dutch fashion," though ineffectual attempts were made to bar book auctions at the fairs—about the only time when it was profitable to dispose of books in this manner. The Dutch, it may be remembered, were the first to sell books by auction, the custom having been introduced at Leyden by Christopher Poret, a naturalized Frenchman, who on July 6, 1599, sold at public auction the library of the famous Marnix of St. Aldegonde.

The supply of old books being thus artificially limited and restricted, it will be readily understood why the trade in old books was backward. In many parts of Germany the laws down to the xixth century imposed a penalty upon the selling of new books in sheets by a dealer in old books, and, until 1860, the Prussian laws exempted the second-hand bookseller from the examinations that every publisher and bookseller was obliged to undergo when he wished to establish himself in business. In short, the bookmonger's business in the eyes of the law as well as in those of the booktrade was regarded as

an inferior branch, one that must perhaps be tolerated, but of which no one had reason to be proud.

The conditions of the old-book trade in other countries were not unlike those in Germany, the cradle of bookselling; but the introduction of auction sales blazed the way for the dealer in old books, and gradually he fought his way to the eminence from which he now complacently looks down upon his persecutors and detractors of former generations.

In France the *bouquiniste* found recognition earlier than elsewhere. About the middle of the sixteenth century dealers in old books were found established in the shops in the lanes of old Paris, many of whom by the beginning of the seventeenth century had made their way to the Pont Neuf, which, in its day, according to Edouard Fournier, "was the largest of reading rooms, not only by reason of the gazettes and lampoons that were sold there, but on account of the books which were there found in multitudes and lay on the two long parapets which stretched across the river like rows of shelves in some immense library." The word *bouquin* now applied to old books did not exist in the earlier days, or was little used in the sense it received towards the close of the eighteenth century. It was at the time of her great trade in books with Flanders and Holland that France imported this characteristic name, which, as M. Uzanne once said, reminds one of the musty smell of goat or calf skin. The Dutch used the word *boekin*, meaning a little book, derived from the German *buch*, a book, which had been derived originally from the Sanscrit *pac*, to bind or tie.

England, like Germany, treated the second-hand bookseller with scant courtesy until comparatively recent times. When William Cooper, October 31, 1676, introduced the "Auctionary Way" into England, Robert Clavel in the next edition of his "Catalogue of all the Books Printed in England since the Dreadful Fire of London," promptly denounced the proceedings as follows: "As to the late Method used in selling Books by Auction in London, I suppose that many Men have paid dear for their experience in this way and I judge it may be demonstrable, that 'tis more probable for the Buyer

to gain advantage by a Lottery, than in this way, being likely by That, once in twenty times a man may get a Prize, but in This, 'tis more than twenty to one if ever he gets That, or a Pennyworth, it being apparent that most Books bought in an Auction, may be had Cheaper in Booksellers' Shops. And it cannot be well Judged otherwise, for a Thousand at least of the Printed Catalogue of a Library to be expos'd by Auction being dispersed, many commissions for the best Books are given, it may be twenty orders for one Book, that when the Buyers think to have it Cheap, they outbid one another and run 10 or 12s. in 30 beyond the Price in Shops, sometimes more, sometimes less. The Experience of which being Known and felt, and the imposing of old Rubbish out of Shops, and bad editions of books under pretence of Eminent Men's Libraries, with other Methods not here mentioned, may in a little time put an End to this Project; for the Reputation of it now growing weak and faint the Proprietor of a Library will not judge it for his advantage to be at a hundred pounds charge to have a Catalogue taken and printed (with other attending expenses) of an ordinary collection of Books, but Judge it his Interest, to sell them intire, to the Party that bids most for them."

EARLY AUCTION SALES.

The first book auction, so far as is known, was held July 6, 1599, at Leyden, Holland, by Christopher Poret, a naturalized Frenchman. It was the library of the famous Marinix of St. Aldegonde.

On April 14, 1671, Christian Kirchner petitioned the Duke of Saxony for the privilege of selling books at auction, "das er schon zweimal nach Holländischer art und weise auctionirt und in diesem *actua* das Eis gebrochen habe." The first collection sold was the library of the father of the philosopher Leibnitz disposed of during the Michaelmas fair in 1671. In Germany the opposition to auction sales for a long time was very bitter, and many complaints were heard of the frauds practiced at public sales. A pamphlet published early in the seventeenth century—a new edition was printed, *sine loco*, in 1697—bears the motto: "Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.—Leviticus, xix: 11," and claims to "demonstrate and prove that the public book auctions bring reproach upon the booktrade, and work grievous injury to scholars." The *exposé* of the trickery and fraud which the

writer of the pamphlet claims to have discovered in connection with book auction sales ends with the following quotation from Thesalonians iv. : 6: "That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified."

In England William Cooper, who carried on a bookselling and publishing business at the sign of "The Pelican," in Little Britain, was the first to introduce the "auctionary way," by offering for sale on October 31, 1676, the library of Dr. Lazarus Seaman, an old Cambridge don, who had been Master of Peterhouse and Vice-Chancellor of the University, at the late doctor's house in Warwick Court, Warwick Lane. The sale lasted eight days. Notwithstanding the very strong opposition to auction sales from a large number of the booktrade in England, they found favor from the start with the bookbuyers and impecunious scholars. From 1676 to 1682 no less than thirty sales were held, and these included among others, the important collections of Lord Warwick, Sir Kenelm Digby, Dr. Thomas Watson and John Dunton, the eccentric bookseller, who, in 1685-1686, visited the Massachusetts Bay Colony to dispose of a stock of books. In time the booksellers also encouraged auction sales, and diverted them to their own uses, notably to unload their heavy stock, or to effect what to-day in England is termed "a rig."

With the dispersion of books from private libraries through auction sales came the opportunity for the dealers in old books in London, who first settled themselves in and about the neighborhood of Little Britain, Moorfields and in St. Paul's churchyard, gradually working their way over to Fleet Street and the Strand. A sturdy race of booksellers grew out of those who first established themselves in the old book trade, among whom may be mentioned Robert Scott, Bateman, Henry Ballard or Bullard, William Newton, Wilcox, Benjamin Franklin's friend; Lackington, Allen & Co., who, in 1801, claimed to be the "Cheapest booksellers in the World;" Thomas Tegg, Charles Tilt, James Toovey, Charles Davis, Joseph Smith and James Westell. The giants of the nineteenth century and of the present time are too well known and hence need not be referred to here. In England, however, as well as elsewhere, the beginnings of the dealer in old books were humble enough, the day of small things continuing well into the nineteenth century.

In the United States, as may be imagined.

there always has been a trade in old books. So early as 1693, Duncan Campbell, then at the Dock-head over against the Conduit, in Boston, who, according to Dunton, was "very industrious and dressed à la mode," offered for sale the library of "the late Reverend and Learned Mr. Samuel Lee." The catalogue of this collection, which, according to the Rev. Thomas Prince, was printed for Campbell by Bartholomew Green, is, as far as is known, the earliest printed catalogue of a library to be sold over the counter of a bookseller in America. Nor does it seem that auction sales met with any opposition in the new world. The earliest auction sale in the colonies of which we have any record is that of the library of the Rev. Ebenezer Pemberton, which was offered for sale by Samuel Gerrish at the Crown Coffee House, in Boston, July 2, 1717. Advertisements of auction sales or vendues of books are found quite frequently in New England journals in the early part of the eighteenth century.

The earliest trace we have found of a book auction sale in New York, was one held by David Dunham, on February 25, 1812, at 144 Pearl Street. The sale was announced to begin at four o'clock P.M. precisely, and the two conditions of the sale were simply these: "(1) If any difference arise concerning any Book sold, it shall be immediately exposed to sale again; (2) The Money to be paid at the Delivery of the Books." Undoubtedly auction sales were held in New York earlier than this, but history is silent on the subject. Besides David Dunham there were in the book auction business in New York William McLaughlin, who, in 1823, was associated with McLaughlin & Blakely at 41 Maiden Lane, and later with Stephen R. Wiggins, in the firm of McLaughlin, Wiggins & Co., at 68 William Street, at which stand, after the dissolution of the partnership, Wiggins continued alone until 1830. Passing over the dozen or more lesser-known men who sold books by auction, we reach the names of the two firms that are still remembered or in existence, namely, George A. Leavitt & Co. and Bangs, Merwin & Co. The firm of Leavitt, so long known in connection with the Trade Sales, was established by James E. Cooley, (who afterwards became Leavitt's father-in-law,) in 1833, at the "Panorama Sales Rooms," at 151 Broadway. With Cooley were associated at different times Lemuel Bangs and John Keese, while Leavitt had Robert M. Strebeigh and his brother, W. B. Leavitt, as associates in the auction business. The business of Bangs & Co., now the Anderson Auction Company,

was established by Lemuel Bangs in 1829, at 85 Chatham Street.

In Philadelphia book auction sales were held as early as 1737, Benjamin Franklin being among the pioneer auctioneers. Robert Bell, the well-known Philadelphia bookseller and publisher, was also a noted auctioneer during the Revolution. Bell, who subscribed himself the "humble provedore to the sentimentalists," printed many curious articles in the newspapers on the great benefit of auction sales. The notes in his sale catalogues are very amusing as a rule, and always highly patriotic. He died suddenly, in 1784, while on an auction tour to Richmond, Va. Among Bell's better-known contemporaries were John Dunlap, William Brown and Samuel Dellap. In the latter part of the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth centuries there were among the auctioneers in Philadelphia, William Pritchard, on Market Street, Edward Pole, on Chestnut Street, and William Cobbett, who for two years was settled at South Front Street as editor of *Peter Porcupine's Gazette*, and occasionally acted as auctioneer at public sales of books. Cobbett's intemperance in controversy provoked suits for slander by Dr. Rush and others, and in 1798 he abandoned "the town in which he had neither enjoyed nor given any brotherly love." F. Montmoulin, at 53 North Front Street, sold books at auction from 1798 to 1810, possibly later. M. & S. Thomas, who for a quarter of a century acted as official auctioneers for the booktrade in Philadelphia, were in the book auction business at 87 Chestnut Street as early as 1802. George W. Lord, at Sixth and Decatur Streets, was a contemporary of M. & S. Thomas, who were succeeded by Thomas & Sons. George W. Lord afterward removed to New York, and settled at 356 Broadway, where he was succeeded by Jordan & Norton, the junior partner being Charles B. Norton, who afterwards published the *American Publishers' Circular*, the predecessor of *The Publishers' Weekly*. Then followed Thomas Birch & Sons, and, more recently, Davis & Harvey, and who are connected with the older generation of auctioneers through their connection with Stan V. Henkels, for years connected with the Thomases. S. G. Hubbard, at Walnut and Fifth Streets, for years had charge of the booksales in Cincinnati.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE OLD BOOK BUSINESS.

The fifty years from 1825 to 1875 will probably in time be regarded as the "Golden Age" of the old book business in England and in the United States. During those years

most of the rarest books now known were changing hands, the auction rooms on both sides of the Atlantic being kept busy with the cataloguing and selling of the "monuments of typography" reared since the invention of printing. The collector of that period still had leisure to indulge himself in his hobby; he had, furthermore, that knowledge of, as well as love for, books, and the zest for the hunt in person after rare book treasures, that differentiates the bibliophile from the bibliophile. The dealer in old books of that period was either a scholar or a bookworm who made up in instinct and phenomenal memory what he lacked in actual erudition. If the reader would gather but a faint picture of those times let him imagine himself at some auction in London of the period of which we speak, at Leigh & Sotheby's, Puttick's or Christie's, in the company of Dr. Dibdin, who is justly entitled to the honor of having created the love for rare books in England, and even on the Continent, where he raised "merrie hellee" on his "Bibliographical Tour;" John Payne Collier, Alexander Dyce, Henry Huth, the Earl of Crawford, the Earl of Ashburnham, the Earl of Hopetoun, J. O. Halliwell-Phillips, George Hibbert, to mention only a few collectors, or perhaps meet them in the shops of William Pickering, Henry G. Bohn, H. Sotheran, James Toovey, William D. Reeves, F. S. Ellis, Obadiah Rich, Henry Stevens or Bernard Quaritch; or, let him go back in imagination to those memorable nights at Cooley & Keese's, Bangs, Merwin & Co.'s, or George A. Leavitt & Co.'s in New York, and witness the battles royal for the treasures offered, between such giants as Dr. George H. Moore, J. Carson Brevoort, William Menzies, S. L. M. Barlow, Henry Cruse Murphy, John Carter Brown, James Lenox, John Allan, the Duyckinck brothers, Hamilton Cole and others of as great renown as mighty bookhunters, or listen to their book talk in the sanctum of George P. Philes's shop on Nassau Street, at T. H. Morrell's around on Fulton Street, at D. G. Francis's on Broadway, or at the shops of William Gowans on Chatham Street, Bartlett & Welford in the Astor House on the Barclay Street side, at Sabin's on lower Nassau Street, J. W. Bouton's, 'way up Broadway, aye, even at Stockwell's the ragman, on Ann Street, where the elect were permitted to rescue many a treasure from the maw of the paper mill. We remember, among others, a copy of "Hakluyt's Divers Voyages," 1582, that was thus saved, at practically the price of several pounds of old paper. Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," (1855,) with the

"cow-boy portrait," was a drug in this shop at ten cents a copy. The libraries of a number of New York collectors were considerably enriched by manuscript and book treasures that were raked out of Stockwell's junk heaps.

In the earlier days, too, book treasures were still within the means even of impecunious collectors, and frequently a book or pamphlet that now fetch their weight in gold in the auction room might be picked up for the proverbial old song. Henry Stevens, it will be remembered, bought a copy of "The Bay Psalm Book," in a lot of old pamphlets, for 19s. at the Pickering sale in 1855, the volume having cost Pickering 3s. In 1878 Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt gave \$1200 for the Brinley copy, and the imperfect Livermore copy in 1894 fetched \$450. Henry Stevens, in his "Recollections of Mr. James Lenox," commenting on the changes of book values and the opportunities for obtaining them, says that in 1854 and 1855 he "expended more than \$50,000; many opportunities occurring then that can hardly ever occur again for any collector of Mr. Lenox's tastes. On reviewing the invoices of these two years, I am confident that if the same works were now to be collected they would cost more than \$250,000. But can such and so many rare books ever be collected again in that space of time?" Seventeen years have elapsed since this was written, and the difference in time has added probably several other fifths to the value of the books referred to by Mr. Stevens. Whether even at the increased price the same books could be gathered together in twenty years' time is exceedingly doubtful.

With these facts before him the aspiring young apprentice who is preparing himself for this field will realize that the future dealer in old books cannot hope to be favored by circumstances as his predecessors were, and that therefore he must come equipped with a deeper and wider knowledge and greater industry than his forefathers were obliged to possess in order to attain to the high position they held in the book world. That thus equipped it is still possible for a young man to make a mark let the example of M. Voynich suffice as a stimulant.

THE SECOND-HAND BOOKSELLER.

The term "second-hand bookseller," as applied to a dealer in old or used books, had its origin in the new world, so far as we have been able to trace it, the custom of our forefathers having been to employ speech to express their meaning with "Biblical plainness," rather than to spare the sensibilities of a

peddler, or one whom they considered to be a scavenger, or, at the best, a monger. For a century or more, in Europe, the dealer in old books was classed with the antiquaries. The term *antiquarius*, originally, was applied by the ancient Romans to one who in his speech and writings affected the archaic; during the Middle Ages the *antiquarius* was a scribe, usually a monk, who devoted himself exclusively to copying old writings. Later, during the renaissance of the study of the classics, the term *antiquarius* was applied to the scholar who devoted himself to the study of the antiquities, especially to the study of ancient works of art; in this sense the French to-day employ the word *antiquaire*, the Italian the word *antiquario*, and the English-speaking people the word antiquary. The German only occasionally applies the word in this sense, and then only in its Latin form, *antiquarius*; as a rule the term *antiquar* is used by the German to distinguish the dealer in old books from his brethren in the trade, and the word *antiquariat* to designate the second-hand book-trade.

From time to time English-speaking dealers in old books, seeking to break away from what they considered an inelegant title, or a nickname of their profession, have called themselves antiquary, bibliophile, bibliopolist, or have given themselves some other more or less fancy and indefinite title, which, in short order, has been translated by the bibliophile, bibliognost, bibliolater, bibliotaph or other bibliomane, into the vernacular but more expressive appellative, "second-hand bookseller;" and under this homely title they will very likely be obliged, in English-speaking countries, to continue their trade in old or used books, until a more euphonious name may be invented.

No branch of the book business makes so many demands upon the intellectual activities and business qualifications of its followers as does that of the dealer in second-hand books. One who aspires to become a so-called "all round" second-hand bookseller, must have a good schooling, supplemented by a reading acquaintance, at least, with such modern languages as French and German. A rudimentary knowledge of Latin is not only desirable but indispensable, as without it the literature of antiquity would remain sealed to one entirely ignorant of Latin "as with seven seals;" indeed, not only the literature of the classic age, but much of that of comparatively recent date, when Latin was still the language of scholarship, would remain inaccessible without some knowledge of its rudiments. Later

he will find it necessary to become initiated in the mysteries of early paper-making, the making of inks and types, as well as printing, bookbinding and the ornamentation of books; that field of iconography which relates to portraits, emblems, etc.; xylography, etching, engraving on wood, copper, steel, etc.; illuminating and the work of the early copyists, etc.; in short, he must have some sort of acquaintance with the processes by which books, both manuscript and printed, came into the world and were made attractive to the eye. A portion of this knowledge he must store in his memory for immediate use, a larger portion he must be able to locate in the literature existing upon these subjects; hence, he must have a sense of order and a retentive memory, or be able to train it to become so.

Besides these requisites, the aspirant to honors in the second-hand book business should have, by way of preparation, the capacity to express himself concisely and intelligibly in conversation and correspondence; and, inasmuch as he will come into contact chiefly with cultivated people, politeness and tact must be acquired if they are not inborn. There will also be required of him a certain amount of commercial instinct, if not training, because every one connected with the second-hand book business will sooner or later be called upon to judge the values of stock as well as to dispose of it by commercial manipulation—that is, he must qualify himself to be able to buy as well as to sell books.

We do not claim that he who wishes to identify himself with the old booktrade must necessarily be a scholar, or even half a scholar, at the start; what we do maintain is that, without a good education, a certain amount of commercial genius and a determination to take advantage of all the opportunities offered in the second-hand book business to train himself and to acquire that comprehensive, if not always thorough, knowledge indispensable to him who aspires to reach the very top of his profession, the young man who enters this branch of the booktrade, unless he devotes himself specially to modern English literature or that comprehensive field now known as "Americana," can never hope to raise himself much above the level of a dealer in junk.

ACQUAINTANCE WITH A STOCK OF OLD BOOKS.

The first duty of the apprentice of a dealer in old books, as it should be also the daily occupation of his seniors, is to make himself thoroughly acquainted with his employer's stock, and to see to it that it is kept clean and in good order. Books that may have

been removed from the shelves for inspection or for some other reason, or that may have been returned by customers to whom they were sent for inspection, must be returned to their proper places, which may easily be done if every title is recorded with a shelf number on a catalogue card. Indeed, it will be excellent practice for the newcomer to carefully study the catalogue of his employer's stock. Every book on the shelves should be represented by a catalogue slip, though not every slip may represent a book in stock. Comparison with the catalogue will show whether a book has been overlooked in cataloguing, or whether a book catalogued as still in stock has been sold. Books that may have become defective while in stock should be repaired, or, if desirable, rebound. Incidentally, in making these rounds, the opportunity of dusting the stock thoroughly should not be overlooked.

It may not always be practical to follow this plan closely in becoming acquainted with stock; for example, when the number of books on hand runs well up into the thousands, too much time would be unnecessarily lost in comparing the books with the catalogue cards. In the case where it may be impracticable to go through the whole stock, book for book, it would be desirable for the novice to acquaint himself thoroughly with the card catalogue, as well as the catalogues that his employer may already have printed, and as often as occasion may offer itself, to inspect the books themselves. It should always be borne in mind that the most important requisite of the dealer in old books is an intimate acquaintance with his stock.

Another excellent practice, and one that may be made profitable at once, is to read carefully the desiderata of other booksellers in the columns of the trade press, namely, the list of "Books Wanted" in *The Publishers' Weekly*, the *London Publishers' Circular*, and *The Bookseller*, the German *Börsenblatt*, the French *Bibliographie de la France* and such other periodicals as may be subscribed for by his employer. Such literature is not only a guide to what may be actually needed at the moment, but also to what it may be profitable to buy.

PRICING OLD BOOKS.

Pricing books before they are shelved is a matter that, of course, is left principally to the employer or his chief assistant, and need not therefore concern the novice. It is, indeed, a task of extraordinary difficulty, requiring judgment and ripe experience, and

will be referred to in another chapter. Every book in stock, however, bears its selling price on a certain leaf or on one of the covers; often the minimum price at which the book may be sold is added to the maximum "asking" price, as well as the date of purchase, the price paid for it and a shelf number. In most cases in this country the selling price is marked in plain figures, and only the purchase price is given in cipher. In exceptional cases—in Europe almost in every case—all the bookseller's private memoranda are noted in cipher. Ciphers are usually made up of one word or of a sentence of nine letters easily remembered, the figure 0 being usually given in its regular form as o. Let us take, for example, the words "daring boy."

In this case the selling price of the book, if to be sold at \$1.25, would be marked "D.a.n," the figure standing for the dollar generally being given in a capital letter followed by a period. A primitive form of cipher is made up of the first nine or ten letters of the alphabet, or of the same number of letters of the alphabet, following any given letter after a, as

e f g h i j k l m n . In giving the sales
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

price and the minimum price at which the bookseller would be willing to let the book go, the price of a \$2.50 book that under circumstances might be sacrificed at \$2 would
F. i n.

be given thus: ———. Most dealers in old
F. n n.

books add to the sales price the price they paid for the book, and some dealers extend this information to include the date when the book was purchased, the price of the book when first published, as well as its catalogue number. In such a case let us imagine that the bottom of the inside of the front cover is reserved for the catalogue number, the date when bought, and the purchase price, and the top of the inside of the back cover contains the selling price and the original published price. The status of the book would then appear as follows:

FRONT COVER.

85. 152.'99 \$1

BACK COVER.

F. i n. (5.)
F. n n.

This would indicate that the shelf number of the book is 85. It was bought on the 15th of February, 1899, at \$1. Originally published at \$5.00. To be sold at \$2.50 or possibly at \$2.00.

The custom of marking books, of course,

varies according to individual notions, but every careful dealer will mark at least two of the items noted above—the buying and the selling prices. By so much as he adds further information, either to the book itself, or to his card catalogue, will he be better able to keep in closer touch with the progress and standing of his business, and to determine in what measure his prices, for example, are adequate or inadequate, and therefore to give his patrons satisfaction while he is also protecting himself.

BUYING OLD BOOKS.

The most difficult task of the dealer in second-hand books is the buying of stock. An unscrupulous dealer, of course, has little trouble in driving sharp bargains with the ignorant owners of small collections inherited from some bookworm of the family, in browbeating the poverty-stricken collector, or in taking advantage of those whom he suspects of having come through dishonest means into possession of the books they offer for sale. The honest and conscientious dealer, however, being above these practices, must weigh carefully the values of the books brought before him, and, while in many cases his verdict may be a disappointing one to the owner of books—in most cases the exaggerated hopes of those who desire to sell books will never be realized—the bookseller's verdict will no doubt be just, and based upon an almost exact knowledge of values of the books and of the probable demand for them. Bidding on small lots is an easy matter, because books that are offered daily in the bookshops generally consist of ordinary material, the current value of which is a matter of common knowledge. In purchasing such books it is natural for the buyer to acquire his stock at as low a price as possible, because it frequently happens that even those books that are most in demand to-day, for some unknown reason are not wanted to-morrow at any price. In buying, the bookseller must consider whether it is likely that he can again dispose of the book; if so, how long will he be obliged to keep the book in stock, and at what price will he be able eventually to sell it; is the book offered the latest edition? is a new edition likely to be published shortly? has the book been reduced in price by the publisher since it was first published? what is the publisher's net price? is it in stock? is the book in good and saleable condition, etc. According to the answers the bookseller may be able to give to these questions will his offer be high or low, or will he decline to buy

it at all. For books in demand it is the practice of most booksellers to offer a third or a quarter of their original price, in some cases a higher price will be paid; but as a rule less will be offered, especially by those ignorant booksellers, who, to be quite on the safe side, buy books "by heft," weighing the books in their hands and offering the price per pound of old paper for the lot regardless of their value.

It is a good rule in buying small lots of books for the bookseller to induce the owner to put a value on his collection rather than to make a price for him. In following this course the bookseller will get an idea—it is immaterial whether the idea is right or wrong—of the expectations of the person with whom he is dealing; whether he is inclined to sell his books at a reasonable rate, or whether his expectations are extravagant. In case the seller expects more than his books are worth in the market it may be possible to convince him of the error of his thinking; but if he is reasonable and asks about what the bookseller would have offered, then the conscientious buyer is in a dilemma, for if he agrees to pay without demur what is demanded the seller is apt to reason that he has been too modest and that the bookseller has taken advantage of him, whether that be the case or not. Some booksellers, therefore, as a matter of business, always offer less than the price demanded, in order, we imagine, to impress those with whom they are dealing with the idea that their knowledge of the values of books is superior. Whether this is good ethics, we confess it would be perplexing to decide. It would depend upon circumstances whether it would even be good business to treat in this way a chance customer who is offering something desirable, as the bookseller would be taking a risk that a well-informed owner might go elsewhere with his books. In considering the purchase of rare and precious books the date, condition, binding and former ownership must also be taken into consideration. In such cases the booksellers' memory, knowledge and experience may assist him in making a suitable offer; if not he must resort to his reference library.

The bookseller should avoid making offers in the presence of other customers, as it frequently happens that a bystander becomes interested in the new purchases, and, knowing the cost price, would be disinclined to pay even a reasonable profit on such books. The bookseller also should make it an inflexible rule never to buy expensive works from minors. Even when buying such works from adults it is always well to take such precau-

tions as to require the name and address of an unknown person and to try to discover how he came into possession of whatever of value he may be offering. A little tact and knowledge of human nature may help the bookseller in such cases to protect himself; and yet, in only too many cases, will all the efforts of the bookseller to safeguard himself against loss be fruitless, and the only satisfaction that he may take to himself will be the consciousness that he has done his utmost to protect himself and the community against fraud and theft. When doubts are aroused as to the honesty of a person offering rare or expensive books it might be well under some pretext to detain the person or his books until his statements can be verified; if that is not possible, or the suspected person acts in a way to confirm suspicion of his honesty, it might be well to give him an inkling of the feeling entertained towards him, to pass a word of caution to the neighboring booksellers, and to warn the trade through the trade journals against the person suspected. It need hardly be pointed out that no honest bookseller would be so foolish as to entertain an offer to buy from an irresponsible person for two dollars a work which he knows is worth five times as much. He might find it to his loss and discomfiture that it is not always wise to buy too cheap. Nor would he buy quantities of recently published books from any one, young or old, not properly accredited, or without making personal inquiries of the references given, as it frequently happens that such books are in most instances dishonestly acquired.

THE SECOND-HAND BOOKSELLER'S SOURCES OF SUPPLY.

Besides buying books over the counter the dealer in old books must also seek his supplies in the purchase of private libraries and in the auction room. Of these sources, perhaps, the purchase of private libraries during the lifetime of their owners is the most desirable. A collector, as a rule, has a fair knowledge of the value of his collection, and while he may be keen to get the highest possible price for his collection, he is also fully conscious of the uncertainty of the fate of libraries when they are thrown into the market or into the auction room, and may be induced to consider a reasonable offer. In the more frequent cases, when the library is offered for sale by the heirs of a collector, the task of valuing the collection is not likely to be so easy or so pleasant, because in most cases a man's family has either a very exaggerated opinion of the value of his books, or is quite ignorant

of their value, and therefore intent upon getting even more for them than those of the former class.

In estimating the value of a considerable number of good books it might be desirable to make a rough list, in case the owner should not have prepared one, which can be priced at his leisure by the bookseller or by one of his assistants. Every collection may be divided into three classes, (1) rare or standard books, (2) books for which there is less frequent demand, and (3) books and miscellanea which must probably be sent to the paper mill. The first class will no doubt be priced high, the second class medium or low, and the third class not at all. It is the practice of some dealers to make two prices—a minimum price, or the lowest they dare to offer, and a maximum price, or one beyond which they will positively not advance, and which is generally based on the presence in the collection of a sufficient number of books which the bookseller knows he may readily dispose of.

It need hardly be pointed out that the appraisal of any large collection of books, with or without the aid of bibliographic reference works, depends upon a more or less exact knowledge of books, an almost unflinching memory of values, and, last, but not least, a certain instinct, or scent, that will enable the appraiser, almost at a glance, to differentiate the valuable from the worthless. It will require many years' experience and much study to become proficient in this difficult art, and the novice will no doubt suffer many defeats and losses before he can become expert enough to do justice to himself as well as to those with whom he is dealing. As we said before, it is more difficult to buy good books than to sell them, and the task of buying is never made easy for the bookseller. Time and again he is called upon to appraise a collection either in the library of the owner or by pricing lists submitted to him, only to find that his tedious work has been in vain, or that his estimates have been used as a lever with which to "jack up" the prices of his competitors. In cases where he is expected to appraise a desirable collection the bookseller would be quite within his rights if, before fixing his prices, he were to demand the option of either meeting, or, if desirable, raising the bids of his competitors.

Buying books at auction is a simpler matter and is attended with less risk than is the purchase of entire libraries. As a rule auction catalogues are published a week or two before the sales take place, so that the bookseller can at his leisure check such books as he

may wish to procure either for himself or on commission, and decide upon the prices at which he may profitably buy them. Then, too, several days before the sale, he is offered an opportunity to inspect the books themselves, and, when dealing with a responsible auctioneer, is secured against the risk of having defective books foisted upon him if he be prompt in collating them and reporting the defects within the time allowed by the auctioneers—usually ten days.

About the only objection that may be raised against buying books at auction is the apparent waste of valuable time; yet in many cases the bookseller is well repaid for his personal attendance at a sale or for being represented by a reliable proxy. Bids that are left with the auctioneer, or entrusted to a second or third-rate assistant, are inflexible. An unscrupulous or impatient auctioneer may be tempted to start bidding with the maximum bid left with him, and a dummy representative dare not go beyond the prescribed price, even though the advance might be profitable. This can be judged only by the principal or an expert assistant. Then, too, "snooping" among the lots displayed while an auction sale is going on has often been rewarded in the discovery of an unsuspected treasure. It was in this way that Henry Stevens discovered a copy of the Bay Psalm Book in a package of shabby pamphlets during the Pickering sale. Besides, no undue amount of time need now be taken up at an auction sale, when the dealer lives in or near the city in which the sale takes place, because, as a rule, one may form an approximate idea of the time in which the auctioneer will arrive at certain lots.

Two other sources of supply need only be referred to, as they are not often drawn upon by the dealer in old books; we have in mind the publisher who desires to unload "remainders" for cash, and the stock of other dealers in old books. The "remainder bookseller" is an institution in England as is the "Modernes Antiquariat" in Germany; but in the United States "remainders" have thus far found an outlet through sources other than the dealer in old books, because such stock requires for its proper handling and distribution machinery that the average second-hand bookseller either has not or does not care to control.

The study of his colleagues' catalogues should always prove interesting and profitable to a dealer in old books, as opportunities are bound to offer themselves to round out and make more valuable certain special collections already in stock and occasionally to pick up a bargain.

As we remarked before, the buying of good books is a more difficult matter than the selling of them. Opportunities do not often present themselves, especially in large cities or intellectual centres, and the bookseller must therefore, besides cultivating good connections, be alert in every direction, submit cheerfully to many disappointments, and take many steps in vain in search for treasures. While we would encourage enterprise even in bidding for the library of a collector recently deceased, we would deprecate the jackal propensity of some to sit on the doorstep of the house of mourning, before the body has become fairly cold, leaving some such message as this: "Should the estate of the late — — — comprise a library, and if it is your intention to dispose of same, I will be glad to examine it, with a view of purchasing it for cash." In the face of such lack of feeling and coarse commercialism we would almost become reconciled to the conservative bookseller, who rarely leaves his shop, and is content to fish for books with the time-worn bait—a sign in his window reading thus:

I Buy Good Books and Libraries
at the Highest Cash Prices.

SORTING A SECOND-HAND DEALER'S BOOK STOCK.

While it may be true that there is no book, however insignificant and out of date, which a dealer in old books cannot sell sooner or later, it would be unwise for any bookseller to litter up his shelves with insignificant books in the hopes of selling them ten or twenty years hence at a considerable advance on the original purchase price. Indeed, as far as practicable, the dealer in old books, as also his brother dealer in new and current books, should buy, or rather keep in stock, strictly such books for which he has a demand, or for which he can find or create a market. This is especially necessary in large cities and towns where rents in desirable localities are high, and shelf-space, therefore, is proportionately valuable. Hence, the tendency of the modern antiquary to specialize; and if a beginner does not at once devote himself entirely to one subject, he will sooner or later probably find it profitable to pay more attention to one or two subjects than to all of the others that come to his hands.

If, therefore, after much trouble, sacrifice and vexation the dealer in old books has consummated a purchase, and the books are finally deposited in his shop, he must apply himself to the judicious sifting of his purchase. What shall be put on the shelves and what

must be discarded as rubbish are ticklish questions. They are questions of importance, moreover, and not so easily to be decided, since all is not waste paper which the casual observer may be disposed to regard as such. To quote from Max Weg's charming book, "Das deutsche wissenschaftliche Antiquariat": "As every individual has at least one amiable trait of character, one physical or mental distinction, so a book which may seem to belong to the limbo of rubbish, on account of age or subject, may have a redeeming feature, though visible only to the trained observer, and may be interesting and saleable, be it to wise men or—to fools, since one must be prepared to deal also with the latter class. The ways of collectors are so strange, their passions and dispositions so singular; the fashion of collecting so erratic, dropping as frequently from the sublime to the ridiculous as leaping from the ridiculous to the sublime, that the dealer in old books must be reasonably prepared for the future to supply even the seemingly most 'impossible' mania of collectors.

"Whenever room permits, therefore, it is advisable not to be too rash in condemning books to the rubbish heap; and if one is not absolutely certain of its uselessness it might be better to defer its destruction until its room is demanded by a more desirable work. As to some books uncertainty seems hardly possible, their uselessness being so apparent. In such cases everything that distinguishes and adorns the offender is stripped from him. The parchment of his binding is peeled off, portraits, plates, maps and other desirable illustrations ripped out; the *ex-libris* removed, the so-called *super ex-libris*, stamped on the front of the cover, cut out; indeed, after it is denuded of everything that may be of any value the degraded and dismembered book follows his fellow sufferers into the waste-paper heap. Away, then, thou honest *medicus* of 1800; away, too, thou antiquated chemist, physicist and geographer, and take with thee these legal 'meditations' and this 'German history'; away with thee, thou thrice sodden 'Zumpt'; but not thou, thou facetious ditty sung by a loose rake; I shall save thee and thou shalt survive thy learned contemporaries who despised thee, because science becomes antiquated but love and poetry remain forever young."

Even in exercising such discretion and discrimination the bookseller's shelves and store-rooms will in time overflow and make necessary another sorting, and still another, some of the residue, if of enough value to pay for cataloguing and handling, becoming food for

the auction block, the remainder for the maw of the paper mill.

ARRANGEMENT AND CARE OF A STOCK OF SECOND-HAND BOOKS.

The arrangement and care of a stock of old books do not differ much from the arrangement of a stock of current books, except that a dealer in old books will very likely always find it convenient to keep books of a certain class together. The collector, being interested in subjects, will not care to take up his time in "browsing" through the bookseller's stock to find what he knows he exactly wants. After he has exhausted the divisions allotted to the books in which he is interested, he may be tempted to devote his spare time to the remainder of the bookseller's stock—but rarely until then.

Whenever possible, especially if room permits, books should be placed regularly upright on the shelves, and not piled up on their sides, even if a little space may be saved by such a proceeding. It will happen more frequently than is supposed by the beginner that the desired book in such a pile is always at the bottom, and to get at it will necessitate the upsetting of the whole pile, and subsequent loss of time in its rearrangement. Some booksellers arrange their stock alphabetically by authors, others by the numbers the books bear in their catalogues, etc.; but, for the reasons already given, most booksellers prefer to arrange their stock by subjects, depending upon their stock-lists for author and number when books are ordered from catalogues.

The arrangement and care of a stock of books generally, including the building of shelves and drawers, etc., having already been circumstantially described in "The Profession of Bookselling," pp. 25-31, a reference to that chapter must suffice. Further suggestions on classification, etc., are given on pages 179-181. It is of the greatest importance that every book be kept in sight, and that the most careful handling of the stock should be insisted upon, because when a number of volumes of a set are doubled up, that is, placed behind their fellows standing in the front row, some of the books may be shifted from the place where they were intended to stand, or fall through to a lower shelf, and thus cause loss of time when they are wanted and sometimes loss of a sale when they cannot be readily found. The same will happen if the bookseller or his assistants do not watch their stock carefully after a customer has pulled out any number of books and

either has left them on a ledge or some other convenient resting place, or, what is sometimes worse, has replaced them on the shelves himself. A book misplaced through such a cause may miss a chance of being sold for months unless it is discovered and put in its right place at once. A bookseller thoroughly acquainted with his stock, if he trains himself to attend to such a detail immediately after a fussy customer leaves his shop, would be likely to miss a given book from its proper place at once, and so trace it then and there; whereas if he neglected such a duty he might assume, when another customer called for such a book later, and the book were not in its place, that it had probably been disposed of, and so he might lose a sale. If months or years after he should by accident come across it again, the book may have lost considerably in value. As an illustration of this we recall a characteristic note in one of the late Charles L. Woodward's catalogues calling attention to a book which he was offering at a much lower price than he had asked for it a year or two before, ascribing it to the fact that in some unwatched moment a disorderly person had probably removed it from its proper place on the shelf and stuck it in somewhere else, where it remained forgotten until its timeliness and value had both shrunk.

Rare books and manuscripts will of course be kept in safes or in dry fire-proof vaults. Books in fine bindings and other treasures may be displayed in locked showcases, lined with velvet or other soft material, and should be handled as little and as carefully as possible.

Folios and other unwieldy books, unless there should be sufficiently broad and high shelves at the bottom, should be kept separately, preferably laid flat on their sides, or in drawers. Separate plates, portraits, views and other illustrations are kept in drawers, in portfolios properly classified, and as nearly as possible in alphabetical order to make them available for ready reference.

The shop and stock should be kept well ventilated and well swept and dusted, as dampness and dust are two of the great enemies of books. The stock, especially the more valuable books, should be regularly dusted; and from time to time, particularly in the spring and fall, a general house-cleaning would be in order, even if an overhauling of the entire stock is not practicable. In these days of electric lighting and steam heating danger from fire is less to be feared. Where these are not available every precaution must

be taken by guarding gas flames and stoves, and placing these as far from the books as possible, or, better still, by dispensing with them altogether whenever natural light is sufficient and the weather permits. Indeed, as gas and dry air seriously injure leather bindings, it will be well to keep the room in which books are kept at a lower rather than at a higher temperature, and to invent a system of ventilation that will keep the air, especially that at the ceilings, pure and cool. Besides this, the whole store should be thoroughly aired early in the morning and just before closing time in the evening.

Rats, mice, worms and other vermin must also be guarded against systematically. Traps will probably be effective against rats and mice; if not, a cat might prove a helpful aid in keeping them away. For obvious reasons, poisons should not be used in getting rid of these pests. The smaller vermin may best be dealt with by the frequent inspection of the better class of books, by the careful use of substances offensive to these pests, such as benzine, turpentine, camphor, etc., which may be placed upon cloths or sponges and laid upon the backs of the shelves, or by dusting them occasionally with an insecticide like pyrethrum, which is perfectly harmless to the human system though a powerful destroyer of insects. Against the two-legged pest, the book thief, eternal vigilance is the only remedy, and even that is not always a specific. Strangers with bundles, "grips," dress suit cases and other receptacles, and those with cloaks or loose coats with capacious pockets should be closely watched. It would always be well, as a matter of courtesy, to relieve visitors of their impedimenta and temporarily care for these until they depart. This would prevent a dishonest caller from filling bogus bundles or the "grips" and suit cases with books that the bookseller can ill afford to lose. An honest man would take no offence, and as for the dishonest man—his feelings need not be considered. An unknown customer who may display a weakness for lengthy inspections of rare illustrated books will also bear watching, because "for ways that are dark and for tricks that are vain," the book thief who may want certain plates and rare illustrations "is peculiar."

THE SECOND-HAND BOOKSELLERS' STOCK-LIST.

The stock of second-hand books having been sifted, the most important task of the bookseller must next be considered, namely, the cataloguing and pricing of the books. As upon this work depends the ready reference

to the books in stock and on the shelves, and, indeed, the very life of the business itself, it need hardly be pointed out that the task of preparing the stock-list is an exceedingly delicate one, not to be undertaken hurriedly or performed carelessly, and should therefore be attended to either by the owner himself or by an experienced assistant under his employer's direction or in consultation with him.

The titles of the books should be written on separate cards, allotting one card for each book so far as it is possible to do so. A card 3 x 5 inches in size, of good, flexible stock, has been found the most convenient and serviceable by cataloguers. If one card should prove insufficient it is better to use two or more rather than to write the continuation of the title on the reverse of the first card. The cards as completed, each alphabet being separated with a colored card having the alphabet printed at the left-hand corner on a raised shank, should be kept in a metal tray open at the top, or, better still, in a cabinet such as are now furnished by manufacturers of library and office fixtures.

There is a wide difference of opinion among booksellers as to the form of the title. Some booksellers transcribe the title *verbatim et literatim*, while others aim at the utmost brevity. Both these systems have their faults. Verbose titles are apt to be tiresome, and, if persisted in, smack of pedantry, while titles that are baldly and indiscriminately abbreviated may become difficult to understand. The correct method, therefore, lies between these two methods. If the title be altogether too diffuse the bookseller may conscientiously omit the unessential and purely ornamental verbiage. In cataloguing important early-printed books, on the title-pages of which our forebears may have unburdened the entire secret of the "inwardness" of their beloved

literary offspring, it may occasionally, as a matter of curiosity, be desirable to retain its original and often absurd wording even to "lining" the title, that is, separating each line of the title-page with a perpendicular dash |. Evident errors even in the wording and spelling of such a title should be preserved, the bookseller unburdening the responsibility for such errors with a [*sic*] upon the author or compositor who may have "rested in the Lord" for centuries past.

Each stock-list card should give the following information of the book which it represents:

Catalogue Number. This, of course, is changeable and in many cases may not yet exist at all.

Subject.

Author, editor, or, if neither is given on the title-page, the first word (not an article) of the title, or a subject catch-word. Writers using a pseudonym should be catalogued under their own names unless they are better known by their pseudonyms, as for example, George Eliot, George Sand, Voltaire and others.

Title.

Edition.

Number of volumes or parts.

Place and date of publication.

Illustrations, maps and other supplements to the text.

Size.

Binding.

Condition.

Price, giving purchase price, published price if known and sales price.

Shelf-number.

Source of purchase.

A title card as written on these lines would read as follows:

850

Philosophy

Windelband, W: History of philosophy; tr.
by J. H. Tufts. 2d rev. ed. N. Y.
Macmillan, 1901. 8°, cl. Waterstained,
binding warped. ? [\$3.50] o. p. \$2.00

1820

Libbie.

which may be translated, (reading from left to right,) as follows: Number in printed catalogue, 850; subject, Philosophy; author, W:[illiam] Windelband, (W.:, according to the American Library Association rules, being the abbreviated form of William;) title, History of Philosophy; translated by J. H. Tufts and revised for the second time; published in New York by the Macmillan Company in 1901, in octavo, bound in cloth. The book is in disreputable condition as noted, was bought for?, publisher's price \$3.50, and because out of print, and not likely soon to be reprinted, is offered at \$2. The shelf number is 1820 and the source of purchase Libbie's auction room.

Other memoranda for the bookseller's own information such as whether duplicates of any book catalogued may be obtained from the publisher, or from another dealer, at a reduced price, with quotations for single copies and quantities, etc., may be entered upon the title card at the bookseller's discretion, thus giving a complete account of the book since it came into his possession. Of course, many of these details will be dropped in preparing the titles for the printed catalogue. Even in cataloguing the stock for the bookseller's own use some of the details will be found superfluous or impracticable as in the case of minor books, pamphlets, periodicals and newspapers which are bought in bulk and often sold in the same manner. There will be some who will scoff at the suggestion of keeping a stock-list of any kind, preferring to grope by the hour through their accumulation of junk in the vain hope of finding what they think they once might have had, until the impatient customer, tired of waiting, turns away in disgust. Others claim to depend upon their phenomenal and inflexible memories in lieu of a stock-list; but a man who can as instantly and unfailingly locate a book in a stock of ten thousand volumes or upwards as another less gifted person can refer to it in an orderly and well-kept stock-list, does himself an injustice by remaining hidden away in a bookshop. He is a prodigy whom Fortune, if she but knew of him, would surely entice to invade broader and more profitable fields than the second-hand book business can ever afford him.

CLASSIFYING SECOND-HAND BOOKS.

Much time would be saved by booksellers in storing, cataloguing and selling books if a definite system of classification were adopted conforming, for example, to that used in the

"A. L. A. Catalog," published by the Government Printing Office at Washington for the Library of Congress, in 1904. This is based on the Dewey, or decimal, system of classification, the chief arguments in favor of which are that it is familiar to libraries and men of science throughout the world; that it is easily learned and comprehended, and that it is flexible enough to cover all the needs of the bookseller as well as of the librarian.

The field of knowledge, according to the Dewey system of classification, as briefly explained in the introduction to the "Decimal Classification and Relative Index," published by the Library Bureau at Boston, which is given below, is divided into nine main classes, and these are numbered by the digits 1 to 9. The introduction explains that:

Cyclopedias, periodicals, etc., so general in character as to belong to no one of these classes, are marked nought, and form a tenth class. Each class is similarly separated into nine divisions, general works belonging to no division having nought in place of the division number. Divisions are similarly divided into nine sections, and the process is repeated as often as necessary. Thus 512 means Class 5 (Natural science), Division 1 (Mathematics), Section 2 (Algebra), and every algebra is numbered 512.

The books on the shelves and the cards in the subject catalog are arranged in simple numerical order, all class numbers being decimals. Since each subject has a definite number, it follows that all books on any subject must stand together. The tables [given on page 180] show the order in which subjects follow one another. Thus 512 Algebra preceles 513 Geometry, and follows 511 Arithmetic.

In the book after the tables of the classes arranged in their numerical order is an index, in which all the heads of the tables are arranged in one simple alphabet, with the class number of each referring to its exact place in the preceding tables. This index includes also, as far as they have been found, all the synonyms or alternative names for the heads, and many other entries that seem likely to help a reader find readily the subject sought. Though the user knows just where to turn to his subject in the tables, by first consulting the index he may be sent to other allied subjects, where he will find valuable matter which he would otherwise overlook.

The claims of the system may be summed up as follows: compared with other systems it is less expensive; more easily understood, remembered, and used; practical rather than theoretical; brief and familiar in its nomenclature; best for arranging pamphlets, sale duplicates, and notes, and for indexing; susceptible of partial and gradual adoption without confusion; more convenient in keeping statistics and checks for books off the shelves; the most satisfactory adaptation of the card catalog principle to the shelves. It requires

less space to shelve the books; uses simpler symbols and fewer of them; can be expanded, without limit and without confusion or waste of labor, in both catalogs and on shelves, or in catalogs alone; checks more thoroughly and conveniently against mistakes; admits more readily numerous cross references; is unchangeable in its call-numbers, and so gives them in all places where needed, as given in no other system; in its index affords an answer to the greatest objection to class catalogs, and is the first satisfactory union of the advantages of the class and dictionary systems.

The following tables will show at a glance how the subjects are divided:

Divisions

000 General Works

- 010 Bibliography.
- 020 Library Economy.
- 030 General Cyclopedias.
- 040 General Collections.
- 050 General Periodicals.
- 060 General Societies.
- 070 Newspapers.
- 080 Special Libraries. Polygraphy.
- 090 Book Rarities.

100 Philosophy

- 110 Metaphysics.
- 120 Special Metaphysical Topics.
- 130 Mind and Body.
- 140 Philosophical Systems.
- 150 Mental Faculties. Psychology.
- 160 Logic.
- 170 Ethics.
- 180 Ancient Philosophers.
- 190 Modern Philosophers.

200 Religion

- 210 Natural Theology.
- 220 Bible.
- 230 Doctrinal Theol. Dogmatics.
- 240 Devotional and Practical.
- 250 Homiletic. Pastoral. Parochial.
- 260 Church. Institutions. Work.
- 270 Religious History.
- 280 Christian Churches and Sects.
- 290 Non-Christian Religions.

300 Sociology

- 310 Statistics.
- 320 Political Science.
- 330 Political Economy.
- 340 Law.
- 350 Administration.
- 360 Associations and Institutions.
- 370 Education.
- 380 Commerce and Communication.
- 390 Customs. Costumes. Folk-lore.

400 Philology

- 410 Comparative.
- 420 English.
- 430 German.
- 440 French.
- 450 Italian.
- 460 Spanish.
- 470 Latin.
- 480 Greek.
- 490 Minor Languages.

500 Natural Science

- 510 Mathematics.
- 520 Astronomy.
- 530 Physics.
- 540 Chemistry.
- 550 Geology.
- 560 Paleontology.
- 570 Biology.
- 580 Botany.
- 590 Zoology.

600 Useful Arts

- 610 Medicine.
- 620 Engineering.
- 630 Agriculture.
- 640 Domestic Economy.
- 650 Communication and Commerce.
- 660 Chemical Technology.
- 670 Manufactures.
- 680 Mechanic Trades.
- 690 Building.

700 Fine Arts

- 710 Landscape Gardening.
- 720 Architecture.
- 730 Sculpture.
- 740 Drawing. Design. Decoration.
- 750 Painting.
- 760 Engraving.
- 770 Photography.
- 780 Music.
- 790 Amusements.

800 Literature

- 810 American.
- 820 English.
- 830 German.
- 840 French.
- 850 Italian.
- 860 Spanish.
- 870 Latin.
- 880 Greek.
- 890 Minor Languages.

900 History

- 910 Geography and Description.
- 920 Biography.
- 930 Ancient History.
- 940 { Europe
- 950 { Asia
- 960 { Africa
- 970 { North America
- 980 { South America
- 990 { Oceanica and Polar Regions.

The above divisions are then subdivided as follows:

000 to 009 is left blank for local history or biography, etc., where some special collection is making which is to be kept in a case by itself, out of its regular place in the classification.

Bibliography, covering 010 to 019, covers:

- 010 Bibliography.
- 011 General bibliographies.
- 012 Of individuals.
- 013 special classes of authors.
- 014 forms, pseudonyms, etc.
- 015 countries.
- 016 subjects.
- 017 Classed catalogues.
- 018 Author
- 019 Dictionary

In the same manner each class, subject and section is divided and subdivided.

The Expansive Classification, developed by the late Charles Ammi Cutter, (the complete series of which is published by W. P. Cutter, Forbes Library, Northampton, Mass.,) has been described by those who have used it as common-sense and up-to-date. It is said to be clear and easy to apply and that it gives a suitable place for many classes of books for which other systems make no provision or for which they provide badly.

Here, then, are at least two well-known and

tried systems of classification which the bookseller need have no hesitation to adopt, and which will enable him to plan and lay out his stock in such a manner as to enable him in the least possible time to get from the shelves any book that his stock-list may show him to be on hand. Not only will such a system save the bookseller time, but it will also be a positive attraction as well as temptation for the customer who may be prowling around for books on certain subjects to know that he can find everything grouped together that the bookseller has on hand on those subjects.

It were also desirable that a uniform system of abbreviations, designation of sizes, etc., be adopted not only by the second-hand bookseller, but by the booktrade in general. The road in this direction is also clear enough, having been blazed and smoothed by the librarian. Two useful books in this direction are "Rules for a Dictionary Catalog," by Charles A. Cutter, of which a fourth edition, rewritten, was published in 1904 by the U. S. Bureau of Education in its Special Report on Public Libraries—Part 2, (Whole Number 340;) also, the New York "Library School Card Catalog Rules," edited by Melvil Dewey, of which a fourth edition was brought out in 1892 by the Library Bureau of Boston.

PREPARING A CATALOGUE OF SECOND-HAND BOOKS FOR THE PRINTER.

In preparing their titles for a printed catalogue some booksellers, from a motive of economy, utilize their stock-list cards, editing them to suit their purposes by underlining the portions they wish omitted. Such a practice is to be deprecated because, in the first place, as such copy cannot always be made absolutely clear, the printing cost would be considerably enhanced by the charges for time taken by the printer to correct unavoidable errors as well as for the extra time consumed in deciphering the copy, and in the second place, especially if the printer lives at a distance, because there is risk in losing the cards, the replacing of which would cost the bookseller considerable time and trouble, even if he were able to remember all the data he confided to these records of his business, which is very improbable.

It will therefore be more economical, as well as safer, to prepare new cards for the printer, which will not be so formidable or expensive an undertaking as would appear at a first glance, provided the original card has been

carefully prepared on a uniform basis, and the copyist, who need not necessarily be a high-priced assistant, is properly instructed as to the portions which must be omitted. Indeed, such work would be excellent practice for any apprentice, as it would both acquaint him with the books in stock and train him in careful cataloguing.

In preparing a catalogue for the printer it is essential to bear in mind the following points:

(1) *The author's family name* should be printed either in CAPITALS or SMALL CAPITALS of the type in which the whole title is printed, followed by a comma, as DICKINSON, or BEAUFOY, or in a heavier faced type, such as *clarendon*, the first letter only being in capitals, as *Kent*. The given name should follow in plain letters, with a period, as Horace., without the parenthesis affected by some booktrade cataloguers. This would give the bookseller the choice of the following three forms: DICKINSON, J.; BEAUFOY, Mark., and *Kent*, W: Saville. The given name, as already noted, should be abbreviated according to such a rule as that adopted by the American Library Association, now well and widely known, or according to some other rule, provided it is uniform and intelligible to the general reader. Whenever there may be any doubt as to the intelligibility of an abbreviation even according to a standard rule the name should be given in full.

Title, rank, etc., need not be considered except when it may be necessary to distinguish two authors of the same name, as for example, Skinner, T.; and Skinner, T., *M.D.*

Pseudonymous works should be catalogued under the author's real name unless the pseudonym is better known, as George Sand, George Eliot and others. Anonymous books are catalogued under the first word (not an article) or under a subject catch-word.

Collections should be catalogued under the name of the editor.

Works published by societies, communities and governments when bearing no author's name, are catalogued under the name of the society, etc., under whose auspices it is published.

Laws should be entered under the name of the collector or digester, though where a collection of law books is catalogued it would be well also to refer to them under the names of the countries. For assistance in this department Charles C. Soule's "Lawyers' Reference Manual of Law Books and Citations," even

though published twenty-two years ago, will still be found serviceable.

(2) *The title* should be given as full as may be necessary to convey to the reader clearly the character and scope of the book. Except in the cases of rare or curious books the mottoes, etc., may be omitted.

(3) *The edition* should always be noted, including the name of the editor, if his name is given. If the book is a first or rare edition attention should be called to the fact. It is not necessary in cataloguing ordinary books to note that the edition has been "enlarged" or "improved," though such information might be desirable or even necessary in cataloguing scientific or classical books. In most cases it will suffice to note that it is a second or third revised edition.

(4) *The number of volumes*, or parts, when a work consists of several volumes or parts, must always be given. In case of a long set, if a work lacks certain volumes or parts, the set may be reported as a whole, and the missing portions noted in a sentence following this item.

(5) *The place and date of publication* should never be omitted, whereas the name of the publisher of a modern book may be left in doubt. In the case of the works of famous printers, such as Aldus Manutius, Elzevir, Franklin, Morris and others of like repute, it is self-evident that the value of a work would be often considerably enhanced if the name of the printer were also given, though, naturally, not all works by famous printers are valuable simply because they were issued from their presses, any more than because they are several hundreds of years old. When neither place of publication, name of publisher or date is given on the title-page, the missing data, if known to the cataloguer should be supplied in brackets [], or if unknown the fact should be made known by the conventional *sine loco, typogr. et anno*.

(6) *Illustrations*, maps and other supplementary matter should be fully reported. It happens occasionally that illustrations, plates and maps vary in the same edition of a book, or are missing altogether, or that only a few copies, either in the first or later edition, were supplied with an illustration or a map, while the remaining copies lack these. Naturally, a book containing the missing matter is more valuable than those that are without it. Often a book is desirable only because it contains a certain illustration or map.

(7) *The size*, though omitted by some book-

sellors, is essential, especially as a book is often simultaneously published in various shapes and sizes by the same publisher. It is also better to give the size in each case instead of letting the reader assume, as many booksellers do, that every book catalogued is, for example, an octavo, unless another size is actually given.

(8) *The binding* should be described, whether in the original paper covers, in cloth jacket, in extra binding, etc.

(9) *Price*. After which should follow the annotations, a subject to which we may refer in another article on this subject.

These nine points will be found to comprehend the essential points to be covered in preparing a title for the printed catalogue, and are intended chiefly for the guidance of the novice in cataloguing. The ambitious cataloguer will find further and more scientific guides through the intricacies of bibliography in the works already referred to, namely, in Cutter's "Rules for a Dictionary Catalog" and in Dewey's "Library School Card Catalog Rules."

CATALOGUING INCUNABULA.

Besides the books, pamphlets and maps of more recent dates, the bookseller may be called upon to include in his catalogues books of early dates, manuscripts and autographs. Early printed books, included in the term incunabula, derived from the Latin *cunabula*, the cradle, therefore generally designated by the German bookseller as "wiegendrucke," and, occasionally, by the English bookseller as "cradle books," are the books printed in the second half of the fifteenth century when the art of printing was still in its infancy—in the cradle. The Greek word *palæotype*, "an old impression," is also, but rarely, used by pedantic dealers in describing early printed books.

It is still a question even with bibliographers of note where to draw the line for incunabula. While the term is generally accepted as applying only to books printed within the fifteenth century, that is, before the year 1500, a number of scholars would extend the period to 1520, because, though the beginning of the sixteenth century was not remarkable for great progress in the art of printing, they hold that the inauguration of the Reformation distinctly marked the transition period of the whole of Europe from the Middle Ages to the New Era, during which learning was spread with such marvellous rapidity through the printed page. Friedrich Kapp, in his

"Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels," suggests that the period before 1520 might fitly be termed the age of the folio, (*das Foliantenzeitalter*,) because up to that period books were rarely brought out in any other form. Nor is the difference one of exterior only. The literature in folio form was for the scholar and had but little part in the education of the common man; indeed, the true importance of the booktrade as a dominating factor in the education of the people does not begin until the appearance of that numerous and cheap pamphlet literature which in its effect accomplished a complete revolution in the thought of the unlettered people. While these propositions of Kapp and other bibliographers may have much in their favor, librarians, antiquarians and dealers in second-hand books are unanimous in limiting the term of incunabula to the books that were printed from the invention of printing by movable types by Gutenberg, Koster, or whoever the inventive genius may in time be determined to be, until the year 1500, following in this the example of L. Hain, who, in his "Repertorium bibliographicum," describes only the books of that period.

A prominent antiquary once said that "to prepare a satisfactory catalogue of incunabula not only required a considerable knowledge of the subject itself, but also an intimate and complete knowledge of the history and the practical details of the art of printing, paper-making, engraving and the other arts that were laid under contribution in the making of books in the fifteenth century, the basis of which necessarily involves years of preparation and frequent opportunities of becoming acquainted with the books themselves." We readily subscribe to this opinion and cite it here chiefly as a reason for not covering the subject as fully as it seems to deserve. Whoever desires to devote himself to this specialty must go to the sources of information, and we will therefore in this series of articles give only such rudimentary directions for cataloguing early books as may serve as a guide to the beginner, or to those booksellers who occasionally meet with books printed before the year 1500.

The opportunities for picking up early printed books, we might say here, are not so rare as is assumed even by dealers in old books. The rate of production in the book world between 1460 and 1500 was truly amazing, and by 1501 it is reasonably estimated that well-nigh thirty thousand separate works were in existence. In editions of 300

copies of each work, a conservative estimate, there must have been in circulation in the early part of the sixteenth century at least nine million separate printed books. That many of these have been irrevocably lost is undoubtedly true. That many more than is supposed have survived is proven by the recent successes of Voynich, Olschki and others in unearthing not only books printed before 1501, but among them incunabula of lasting worth and value.

In cataloguing a fifteenth century book the following points must be considered: (1) Name of author, or, if author's name is unknown a catchword subject; (2) title of book; (3) size and collation, giving the number of leaves and signatures, the paging, the number of lines to the page, the justification of the lines and the style of type; (4) plates, maps, the number of woodcuts, initials, miniatures and other decorations; (5) name and place of printer; (6) date; (7) binding and note of former ownership; and (8) bibliographical references to the book, and such other collateral information as may be within the reach or knowledge of the cataloguer.

The demands upon the bibliographer, it will be noted, are not so exacting as would appear at first sight; the points to be covered are to a certain extent identic with those which must be considered in cataloguing all books of a later period—the excess of detail being necessary because of the importance and scarcity of the earlier-printed book. Besides, in many cases, if not in all cases, it may be necessary to give but little thought to the drafting of the bibliographical form of the book, inasmuch as Panzer, Hain and his successors, Coppinger, Burger and Proctor, or Voynich, may already have relieved the present-day cataloguer of the necessity of setting up the title *de novo*. In any case, it will be advisable to refer to these authorities because they not only present the best models of cataloguing incunabula, but because frequent use and careful study of these helps will be of greater assistance in learning how to catalogue incunabula than will be a set of mere theoretical rules, however carefully drawn up.

In cataloguing the books that have already been noticed in any of the above-named bibliographies it will be necessary only to give a brief title with reference to whichever of the hand-books in which the book is first fully described, as it may be assumed that Hain's work, at least, is among the tools of every library, bookseller and collector interested in incunabula.

In case none of these standard works of reference give the needed information,* the bookseller will be obliged to depend upon the book in hand itself. In describing an early printed book, as E. Gordon Duff, in his work on "Early Printed Books," points out, care should always be taken not to confuse what is common to all copies of the book with what is specially the peculiarity of an individual copy. The description should therefore always be in two parts, the first general, that is the place, the date, the name of the printer, the size and collation, and the second special, that is an account of the binding, a list of the earlier owners and similar information.

In most cases incunabula have no title-pages in the modern sense of the word. The printed books generally begin, as did their predecessors, the manuscripts, with the text, and—if they give the information at all—usually give an indication of the character or contents of the work in the opening lines, beginning, as a rule, with the words: *Incipit liber*, or, *Hier hebt sich an*, etc. Occasionally the text is preceded with a preface, an epistle, or a so-called "register" or table of contents. In these sometimes the name of the author may be found. At other times this information is given in the *explicit*, *colophon* or *rubrum* at the end of the text, where the title, name of author, name and place of printer and publisher, date, etc., is recorded. *Explicit* derives its meaning from the fact that the end piece in most cases begins with the word *explicit*, "here ends;" *colophon* is the Greek word for "the last," the end; and *rubrum* signifies that in the manuscripts the decorative end piece was written in red ink, or, at least, was underscored with red ink, and in the printed book was treated in the same manner. If any of the required information is missing at either end of the book it will be the duty of the conscientious bibliographer to supply the missing data. Should it be impossible to trace such information the hiatus must be indicated in brackets, ([,]) as *sine loco, anno, et typogr.*, etc. Indeed, all information which is not derived from the title or book itself should be so indicated, and in cases where dates based on examination of water marks or other characteristics are supplied an interrogation point (?) should follow.

Hain, for example, did not have opportunity to inspect personally all the books that he included in his excellent work and distinguishes with an asterisk [] those which he actually had before him when collating.

DESCRIBING INCUNABULA.

The title of a fifteenth century book, as already pointed out, should be given in as brief a form as possible, without omitting the essentials. If it is impossible to condense the title intelligibly it might be better to give it in full, marking the beginning of the lines, if the book is of sufficient importance to warrant such treatment, with an upright stroke (|), reproducing the physiognomy of the type as closely as the resources of the local printing office will permit—in short, giving as close a copy of the original as possible. The colophon should always be given in full.

As regards place, there does not yet seem to be any fixed rule as to the form in which it should be written, whether in Latin or in English. Many of the older bibliographies having been written in Latin and the colophons of the majority of early books being written in the same language, collectors have grown familiar with the Latin forms of most of the place names. However, the trend is rather toward modern forms, and it were well to give the bibliographical information, especially in booksellers' catalogues, in the vernacular and in the most concise and clear form.

The date should always be given in Arabic figures. The day of the month, when it is given in the colophon, should always be put down in the description, as it is often of great importance. In countries where the new year began in March, as pointed out by E. Gordon Duff, in his work on "Early Printed Books," there is apt to be confusion with dates unless it is remembered, for example, that the 20th of January, 1490, is later than the 20th of December, 1490. The beginning of the year varied in different countries, and often in different towns. The four most usual times for its commencement were: Christmas day, December 25; the day of the Circumcision, January 1; the day of Conception, March 25, and the day of Resurrection, (Easter.) The 25th of March was, on the whole, most common; but in dating any book exactly the rule for the particular town where it was printed should be ascertained. An approximate date should always be supplied to the description of an undated book; but this date should not be a mere haphazard conjecture, but should be determined by an examination of the characteristics of the book, and comparison with dated books from the same press, so that the date that is ascribed is merely another expression for the characteristics noted in the book. It is only after a

careful study that accurate dates can be ascribed to books of a particular press, and monographs on particular printers must be consulted when it is possible.

"In describing old books, the old form size should be used, being the only one which does not vary. Under modern notations a cut-down copy of a book in quarto would become an octavo, and thus two editions would be made out of one. The size of an old book is very simply recognized by holding up a page to the light. Certain white lines, called wire marks, will be noticed, occurring, as a rule, about an inch apart, and running at right angles to the fine lines. These wire lines are perpendicular in a folio, octavo and thirty-two and horizontal in a quarto and sixteenmo. In a twelvemo, as the name implies, the sheet is folded in twelve; and in the earlier part, at least, of the sixteenth century, this was done in such a way that the wire-lines are perpendicular; the height of the sheet forming two pages, as is the case in an octavo, while the width is divided into six, instead of four as in an octavo. The later practice has been to fold the sheet differently, the height of the sheet forming the width of four pages, and the width of the sheet the height of three pages; consequently the wire-lines are horizontal. Among early printed books the twelvemo is a very uncommon form; quartos are most numerous, especially after the fifteenth century, and after these come folios."

It should be remembered that the signature has nothing to do with the size of the book. It was merely a guide to the printer to show him how many leaves go to the quire and the order in which they were to come. The binder found it convenient to have his quires of from eight to twelve pages each, and the quires were thus made up whether the book was folio, quarto or octavo. If the quires consisted of eight leaves each, then each quire of the folio book contained four sheets, of the quarto book two sheets, and of the octavo book one sheet.

COLLATING INCUNABULA.

The collation of a book is the enumeration of the number of leaves according to the way in which they are arranged in quires, and this collation should be given whether the quires are signed or not. If there are signatures, there can be no difficulty in counting the number of leaves which go to each quire; but when there are no signatures, as is the case with most books before 1475, the collation is

a more difficult matter. The first thing to be looked at, if the book has no signatures written in by hand, is the sewing, which shows the centre of the quire and enables the counting of leaves from sewing to sewing.* This gives only the halves of two quires, and therefore recourse must be had to the watermarks. In a folio, if one leaf has a watermark the corresponding leaf which forms the other half of the sheet has none. In a quarto corresponding leaves have either no watermark, or each has half of one. With the sewing and watermarks as a basis, there is rarely any difficulty in making out the collation, the first and last quires being perhaps the only difficult ones to determine with accuracy; it is thus always best to settle the arrangement of the inside quires first and work from them to the outer sections, which are more likely to be mutilated. This method of collating by watermarks is very often useful for detecting made-up copies. Notice must always be taken of blank leaves which are part of the book.

Every defect in the text and binding should be frankly reported. Very often missing pages have been replaced by pages from another copy or damaged leaves have been cleverly pieced out with facsimiles or by hand, damaged illustrations retouched or modern bindings substituted for the original ones, etc. All these defects in or deviations from the original edition must be carefully noted and reported. If the work contains miniatures or initials or other decorative additions to the printed page the bookseller must be pardoned if he unduly dwells upon these attractions. The binding, maps, plates, woodcuts, in fact anything or everything that has been added to the volume to make it more attractive should be specially mentioned and described as minutely as they deserve to be.

Previous ownership and the individual history of a book is of the utmost importance and should never be ignored. Notes of these appended to the titles should epitomize the compiler's knowledge of the subject, "working out for the printed book," as Henry Bradshaw says, "the history of the volume from the present to the past; to peel off, as it were, every accretion, piece by piece, entry by entry, making each contribute its share of evidence of the book's history backwards from generation to generation; to take note of every entry which shows either use,

*It was the pernicious custom of many binders in the earlier part of the last century when rebinding an old book to separate all the leaves and then fix them together in convenient sections, entirely ignoring the original "make-up."

or ownership or even the various changes of library arrangement, until we get back to the book itself as it left the original scriptorium or the hands of the scribe; noting how the book is made up; how the quires are numbered for the binder; how the corrector has done his work, leaving his certificate on the quire leaf or page, or not, as the case may be; how the rubricator has performed his part; what kind of handwriting the scribe uses; and finally, to what country or district all these pieces of evidence point. . . . The quiet building up of facts, the habit of patiently watching a book, and listening while it tells its own story, must tend to produce a solid groundwork of knowledge which alone leads to that sober confidence before which both negative assumption and ungrounded speculation, however brilliant, must ultimately fall."

As a fair example of treating the title of a fifteenth-century book for a bookseller's catalogue, we take the following from "Catalogue No. 25 of Old and Rare Books," published by Wilfrid M. Voynich, of London:

Estwood of Ashendon (John) fl. 1350. [Eschnid (Johannes)] *Summa astrologiæ judicialis de accidentibus mundi quæ ANGLICANA nuncupatur.* Large 4to, Rom. type, with signs and numeration, but without catchwords, 2 ll., 218 ll. (sign. n in 9, n^o being blank, was cancelled by the printer), 1 leaf with register, 2 cols., 57-58 lines to a full col., large woodcut MAP of the WORLD on sign. f4, full-page diagram of the world on sign. f5, woodcut diagrams and fine large flor. inits., some old marginal MS. notes, first leaf and some margins stained, otherwise fine large copy, vellum, £8 8s. *Io. Lucidius Santritter,*

for Franc. Bolanus, Venice, 7 July, 1489

EXTREMELY RARE, and the only edition of a very interesting work on meteorology and astrology. The map of the world is described by Nordenskiöld on p. 85. Hain, *6685. Copinger, *6685. Panzer, III, 277, 1228. Proctor, *5184. The only book printed by Santritter alone. Burger's Index, 576.

Regarding the arrangement of the titles of incunabula in a bookseller's catalogue little may be said. If they are run in with other titles they may be distinguished in various ways, according to the fancy of the cataloguer. Usually they are prominently displayed in heavy type under a caption calling special attention to their age, press, or other distinguishing characteristic. In a special catalogue of incunabula the titles are usually arranged in chronological order under the names of the cities where they were printed, the latter arranged alphabetically, as Augsburg, Basle, Cremona, Leipzig, Milan, etc. In exceptional cases fifteenth-century books are catalogued exclusively in chronological order,

that is, according to date of publication. Under no circumstances must they be arranged in alphabetical order by author or title.

CATALOGUING MANUSCRIPTS AND AUTOGRAPHS.

Few dealers in second-hand books may hope to be so fortunate as to come into the possession of manuscripts, documents or autographs of such great age as to require a comprehensive knowledge of paleography to determine their value; and yet, the unexpected is as likely to happen within the four walls of the humblest old bookshop as elsewhere, and it may some time be necessary for the bookseller to have within reach a few hints as to how to deal with such finds. One would be tempted to advise a bookseller who happened to come across a manuscript of the Middle Ages to take it to an expert, did we not have in mind the many egregious blunders committed by so-called experts in the uncertain realm of paleography. Witness the assurance of the average modern handwriting expert in declaring under oath that what is known to have been written by A is the handwriting of X.

In determining the value of an old manuscript much will depend upon the subject matter and the fame of its author. All historical manuscripts, whether written before the invention of printing or later, have a certain value, and are often of especial importance if inedited, that is, if their contents have not yet been included in a printed book.

In cataloging an early manuscript it will be necessary to indicate whether it is written on parchment or paper; the number of leaves that complete the manuscript, in case of an important manuscript, also the number of lines on each page, and whether the lines extend across the page, or whether they are written in columns; whether the manuscript has been entirely written in one hand or by several hands; and, most important of all, when it was written.

If the age is not traceable in the manuscript itself, the determining of the date will probably cause difficulty—much more often depending upon a knowledge of the history of the men and times of a certain period than upon a mere knowledge of handwriting. As Falconer Madan, the well-known paleographer, in his work on "Books in Manuscript," points out, "not only have many converging lines of evidence to be considered—the character of the writing, the details of letters, the style of illumination, the look of the parchment, the known circumstances of its history

—but empirical rules have a way of breaking down." It may be that two manuscripts written in the same year are presented to us, one by a scribe in extreme old age with conservative habits, and the other by a young copyist of the newest school. The style of these two would probably appear to differ by at least fifty years, and nothing but a minute study of paleography would teach a student the way to arrive at a correct judgment of such work. The thing not to do, however, is to venture rashly on too precise a statement, or, as one pseudo-specialist is known to have done, to mistake the word *isto* on an illumination for 1530. Madan refers to a person who, when engaged on dating a manuscript, asserted that

a particular form or contraction in it was not found before 1424, and another not after 1430! The minimum by which a collector could acquire sufficient information to date a volume between A.D. 500 and 1600 would be to consult a set of facsimiles such as are supplied in W. Wattenbach's various works, in W. Arndt's "Schrift-tafeln," or those prepared by the Palæographical Society, and to study the almost exhaustive article on "Palæography" written by Maunde Thompson for the "Encyclopædia Britannica," and Mr. Thompson's "Manual of Greek and Roman Palæography," in the *International Scientific Series*; F. Leist's "Urkundenlehre," or P. Berger's "Histoire de l'Écriture dans l'Antiquité."

ANNOTATING SECOND-HAND BOOKSELLERS' CATALOGUES.

THE second-hand bookseller who deals with his customers at long range—through his catalogues—must be painstaking in presenting his wares exactly as they are. All defects, such as water stains, grease spots, ravages by rodents, worms and other vermin, damage to the covers, missing pages and other lacunæ must be relentlessly reported. Some booksellers possess the happy faculty of describing such defects in the least offensive manner; but such practice if loosely indulged in is apt to bring its author into disrepute and may bring loss rather than increase of business, and justly so. Excellencies, as a matter of course, should not be hidden under a bushel, but even these should not be too pretentiously nor too diffusely brought to the attention of the prospective customer. Book collectors, though in some respects long-suffering, are almost as a rule busy people, who may become impatient with a bookseller's prolixity and so consign his catalogue half read to the paper basket. There are some booksellers, who should know better, whose pens take poetic flights in announcing some second-rate rarity, blind to the fact that superfluous encomiums while they may help a huckster in disposing of his wares, or a haberdasher or "sartorial artist" in convincing some empty-headed fop of the advantages of their goods, nauseate and repel the collector who may often safely be assumed to have more knowledge of the book so brazenly lauded than has the bookseller who commits the offense. For such a customer it is sufficient to know that the book is per-

fect. Indeed, a great mass of good books, so-called classical literature of a recent or present age, may be trusted to sell itself at reasonable prices. An apprentice of average intelligence might be trusted to catalogue such items; certainly no sensible second-hand bookseller would waste a word on a well-known book.

But it is in respect to the much vaster mass of comparatively unknown books that the collector's question, "Why should I buy this book?" should be always present to the cataloguer's mind. As a prisoner is by law assumed to be innocent till proved to be guilty, so the old book, as such, may be presumed to be devoid of interest till something is said, argued or quoted to bring it within the sphere of practical modern curiosity. As to quotation, the young bookseller should also be on his guard lest his vanity or insufficient information play him a "scurvy trick." Where a modest or obscure title does not give a clue to the desirable contents of the book the bookseller must call the attention of the collector to its advantages by an appropriate note. The short time at his disposal does not permit of a thorough reading of the book by the bookseller, but the professional antiquarian is apt, sometimes intuitively, to realize, by simply handling it, that a book has a value above the average, much as the man referred to by a writer in the *London Publishers' Circular*, a few years ago, who with no more literary sense than the average road-mender, possessed that animal instinct for books which fitted him as it was said, "to know

what you want like a good retriever dog, without knowing why you want it." Naturally, such a sense would hardly appeal to those personally acquainted with the man and his stock—the finer scent is a distinguishing characteristic of the trained dealer in old books.

For the purpose of selling out-of-the-way or obscure books, as distinguished from giving them away or passing them on to better-informed dealers, the bookseller must get together within the four walls of his shop enough knowledge and authority of his own to speak with no uncertain note of the wares he has to sell. A help in this direction is the collection of a well-selected reference library, which in the larger book shops in England and

on the Continent often fills a good-sized room and represents an asset of no small money value, as well as monuments of vast human knowledge and almost superhuman perseverance. An intelligent description of an out-of-the-way book may take up much time, but the true dealer in antiquarian literature will ungrudgingly make this sacrifice, because he knows that thereby he fulfils the ideal purpose of his profession and that his greatest usefulness lies in this direction; also, because by his active researches, by his intelligent and discriminating description of the unknown he raises himself from the merchant to a servant of science, indeed, often elevates himself to her pathfinder and guide.

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